

SPEECHES AND PAPERS

JOSEPH DUFFEY

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR OPENING SESSION OF
HEARINGS BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

CONGRESSMAN SIDNEY YATES, CHAIRMAN

MAY 7, 1979

BY

JOSEPH DUFFEY, CHAIRMAN

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Mr. Chairman:

I have a prepared statement which has been submitted for the record. With your permission, I should like to make a few introductory remarks.

The FY 1980 budget presentation prepared by this agency and reviewed by the National Council is the first budget since my arrival at NEH in which I have had an opportunity to set forth my own sense of goals and priorities implicit in the authorizing legislation for the National Endowment for the Humanities, and consistent with current fiscal restraints.

One year ago I presented the FY 1979 budget to the Congress and responded to your questions concerning that budget. That budget was prepared prior to my arrival at the agency. In my presentation here, I stress my own sense of priorities in terms of management procedures and goals. Referring to more than a decade of rapid expansion of programs without what I believe to have been adequate attention to the problems of administration, I ask for resources to institute some changes in these procedures. Some of those changes have been put into place over the past fifteen months; more remains to be done.

The Administration is requesting a 3% increase in the National Endowment for the Humanities appropriation for FY 1980. The reason that this increase is modest - less than the inflation rate - is our sense of the current need for restraint in Federal spending in a time of economic instability.

My original request to the Office of Management and Budget last September was, in fact, for only about an 11% increase. My reason for restraint in that original request was in no way a sense that our Government is providing funding for work in the humanities commensurate with the importance of these fields of learning or responsive to genuine needs in this area. I felt eighteen months ago, when I came to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and I believe today that it is essential that we demonstrate our willingness to attend to fair, purposeful and efficient administration of public funds in this area and I have tried to submit a credible budget in line with these objectives.

The budget before you, then, reflects a number of management decisions which I have made over the past year and a half. I would like to take a few minutes to discuss some of the assumptions and objectives which have guided the preparation of this budget.

Let me say, first of all, that this budget was prepared through a process of extensive consultation, both inside and outside the agency, with more deliberate consideration of priorities than any budget in the history of the Endowment. We have in the process tightened the guidelines for some of our programs and set forth clear choices with respect to priorities in the request for the limited increase before you.

In providing support for work in the humanities the Endowment is responding to needs in important areas of our national life, but also to areas of great sensitivity.

The Report of the Commission on the Humanities, which fifteen years ago made the case for a Federal program of support in this area, argued that the humanities, and I quote:

"...are at once the aspect of culture most in need of help and yet most dangerous to entrust to any single authority whether of church or party or state. A government which gives no support at all to humane values is careless of its own destiny but that government which gives too much support and seeks to acquire influence may be more dangerous still."

I share with the Commission the belief that Federal assistance for work in the humanities, while essential and clearly in the national interest, must be undertaken with restraint and administered with a deft hand.

To insure that the Endowment administers its programs with equity and thoughtfulness and does not exert unwarranted influence on the shape and substance of our cultural life, I have focused attention on key areas in the management of the agency that determine how we do business.

(1) Because data on the needs of our applicants and the programs of the agency had been collected manually over the years, it was not possible when I arrived to discern quickly and accurately the impact that the Endowment was having on work in this area.

As soon as I arrived at the Endowment eighteen months ago, I asked our staff to begin to design and implement an automated data system that would enable us to review and analyze the range and patterns of support the agency has provided. The computer system has been installed and we have already begun to use it in several important areas of our work. Full implementation of this system will take at least another year. We want to keep up that effort. I therefore ask your full support for our administrative budget for FY 1980.

(2) Because the peer review process continues to remain central to the work of the Endowment, I have made it my highest priority to insure that this process is as equitable and objective as possible. I am mindful of the fact that those who participate in the review of applications can well be the decisive factor in determining who will receive support from the Endowment. If the review of applications to the Endowment is not broadly representative of differing points of view, then the awards made by the agency might well become skewed in one direction or another. To insure that this does not occur and that all our applicants are treated fairly and without bias, I have directed the staff to begin to use our computer system in the selection and appointment of independent reviewers and panelists to enable them to refer to a broader range of men and women eligible for these responsibilities.

Currently, we have a bank of some twelve thousand names from which our staff can draw, and our computer is programmed to provide these names without bias as to race, sex, age, geographical location or institutional affiliation. Provided with such a rich and diverse cross section of experts and practitioners in the humanities, I am confident that the Endowment can continue to protect against any semblance of a "closed circle" or parochialism of review in the assessment of applications and the awarding of grants.

(3) Another area of management that has been of great concern to me has to do with the monitoring of the grants we award. The Endowment now has begun to use a computer system to facilitate this task. Within the past year and with the oversight of the Deputy Chairman of Management, the agency has been able to review and close out most of its outstanding audits. As our automated data processing becomes even more sophisticated, we can expect to undertake a wide variety of special studies concerning the activities of past and current grantees of the Endowment and to report our findings to the Office of Management and Budget and to the Congress.

(4) When I arrived at the Endowment, I quickly realized that the work of the agency was being carried out by a very small but talented and hard-working staff who -- without the benefit of automated support systems -- were, nevertheless, continuing an agency tradition of careful grants management. In the appointments I have been able to make, I have sought to complement the existing strengths of this staff by identifying and selecting more women and minorities for senior positions as vacancies arose. I am pleased by the progress we have been able to make in this area. We will continue this effort.

The appointment of a representative staff is of special concern to me because of the responsibility the staff has for assisting applicants and administering the peer review process. On this last point, I might mention that the Endowment continues to adhere to the wording of the Advisory Committee Act which requires that advisory committees and panels be chaired by full-time employees of the Federal Government. Our review panels are chaired by staff who are responsible for seeing that the evaluation of applications by outside reviewers and

panelists is conducted according to accepted and standard procedures and is free from any unwarranted intrusions or inappropriate practices. In the main, I am satisfied that this is the case and that the staff continues to administer the review process fairly.

(5) Because the review of applications occupies most of the time of both our staff and the National Council, I asked that a study be undertaken to determine whether some adjustments were required in our application and review cycles in order to increase the time available to the National Council to discuss issues of management and program policy. Currently, our Council meets four times a year for two days and devotes no less than 12 to 14 hours to a detailed and thorough review of applications and the findings of outside reviewers and panelists. While half a day is set aside for the discussion of policy issues that either have arisen during the course of the quarterly deliberations of the Council subcommittees or have been identified by the Chairman as requiring special attention, I have become convinced that additional and uninterrupted time is needed for the Council to reflect upon larger issues of concern to the agency and our constituents. I anticipate making some changes in the calendar for our Council meetings to ensure that this time will be available.

In the meanwhile, I have taken a first and important step in expanding the scope and range of our policy conversations and deliberations. With the assistance of our computer system, I have recently sent a personal letter to all those who have served on review panels over the past two years, supplying them with information concerning the current policies and practices of the agency and inviting their response, observations, criticisms and suggestions. I have been heartened by the thoughtful replies I have received and it is my intention to share this correspondence with the National Council and to advise the Congress of any significant comments and criticisms that are put forward.

(6) Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a word or two about how I believe the Endowment should relate to other public and private programs of support for the humanities.

As I said earlier, I believe it is the responsibility of the Government to move with caution and to exercise great care in administering programs of support in this sensitive area of our common life. While it is the responsibility of government to ensure that our cultural patrimony and intellectual heritage is maintained and allowed to flourish, the Federal presence in this area should never be dominant or overbearing. While I do not believe the Congress would allow this to happen, it is the duty of those agencies of the Federal Government with responsibilities in this area to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that there is pluralism of private and public support for the humanities that mirrors the cultural pluralism of our society.

The Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities has addressed some of the issues of administration which this pluralism of support involves. We have made genuine progress in our efforts to guard against duplication

and unnecessary overlap in programs. I am pleased to report that over the last year, we have been able to reach several preliminary but important agreements that respond to the directives of this Committee and reflect a responsible stewardship of Federal funds.

Beyond these efforts, I have sought to encourage the private sector -- especially the large foundations and corporations -- to retreat no further in exercising their philanthropic responsibilities and to join with us in a partnership of support for the humanities that will provide a hedge against an unwarranted increase in the Federal share of support.

In making a case for a Federal agency mandated to provide support for teaching and learning in the humanities fourteen years ago, the Commission on the Humanities employed Jeffersonian language that the Congress found hard to resist in framing the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965.

"The humanities," argued the Commission, "are the study of that which is most human. Throughout man's conscious past they have played an essential role in forming, preserving, and transforming the social, moral, and aesthetic values of every man in every age. One cannot speak of history or culture apart from the humanities. They not only record our lives; our lives are the very substance they are made of. Their subject is every man. We propose, therefore, a program for all our people, a program to meet a need no less serious than that for national defense. We speak, in truth, for what is being defended -- our beliefs, our ideals, our highest achievements."

The resources we seek from you today are, in truth, for that program.

"WHY OUR GOVERNMENT CARES ABOUT
THE FUTURE OF U.S.-SOVIET SCHOLARLY EXCHANGE"

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY AT CONFERENCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH EXCHANGE BOARD

by

Joseph Duffey, Chairman

National Endowment for the Humanities

Johns Hopkins School of International Studies

Washington, D.C.

Saturday, May 12, 9:00 a.m.

As some of you are aware, we arranged last year for a breakfast on Capitol Hill attended by a number of Senators, at which four American humanist scholars, all alumni of the IREX exchanges with the Soviet Union, spoke of their experiences and of the value of those exchanges. As the breakfast began, a distinguished Congressional guest arrived and sat down next to a member of the Endowment staff. Taking a sip of coffee, he turned to his neighbor and observed, in what appeared to be only partially in jest, "You know, I only come to these things for the free breakfast." With that, the first of the IREX scholars began to speak. He had only been speaking a few minutes when the Senator turned again to his neighbor. This time, taking out a pen, he whispered, "Do you have a piece of paper?" He spent the rest of his time at the gathering taking notes, completely forgetting about his breakfast.

There are several lessons in that scene and I shall touch on one or two of them in what I have to say this morning.

The first and most obvious, perhaps the most important observation, is this - IREX should not hide its light under a bushel.

This Conference is devoted to - among other things - an examination of what the exchange programs have accomplished, an assessment of their impact on this nation's relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the potentials for the future. We can, I think, properly begin by extending sincere congratulations and thanks to IREX in its eleventh year.

IREX has handled a delicate, demanding, complex - I think I may say esoteric - task with truly admirable skill. More than merely administering an exchange program, IREX has been steadfast in protecting the principles on which free and independent scholarship depends. It has served us well -

on both sides of the exchanges - in steadily pressing to enlarge the opportunities for scholars, to improve access, and to whittle away at the fences labelled "sensitive."

From the specific point of view of the National Endowment for the Humanities, IREX has abundantly justified the support which our Government has provided.

By law, the Endowment is required to "support research and programs to strengthen the research and teaching potential of the United States in the humanities." Of the more than 1,500 Americans who have participated in the exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a thousand or more were engaged in research in the humanities.

The Endowment is also required to "foster the interchange of information in the humanities." What could be more productive of such interchange than IREX's grants for Collaborative Activities and New Exchanges, its travel grants for Senior Scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences, or the symposia, joint research, and surveys which come under the ACLS-Soviet Academy of Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences?

The Endowment is also required to "support the publication of scholarly works in the humanities." We have not directly subsidized the publication of the over 3,000 books and articles which have flowed into the mainstream of American scholarship from the exchanges. But the Endowment is certainly proud to have contributed to making possible the research which inspired the 2,000 or so publications in the humanities which the total represents.

Impressive as these figures are, I find them completely inadequate to convey the contribution to knowledge in this country that they embody. Some statistics are in order to portray the order of magnitude. I have taken those I have mentioned from the 1977-78 Report of the Executive Director of IREX. But frankly, Allen, I find the really exciting part of your Annual Report not in your figures in the front, but in the listings of individual research projects at the back. What a variety of interests! What perception of the richness of the human endeavor! What a tribute to the industriousness of scholarship!

Let me cite a few of these research projects:

- 1) Study of mime, clown, and puppet theatre in Czechoslovakia.
- 2) Hanns Eisler (1898-1962): a socio-musicological study.
- 3) Directions of morphophonemic change in Bulgarian dialects.
- 4) Exile and regrouping of the Hungarian Left, 1919-1939.
- 5) An intellectual history of the University of Cracow in the 15th century.
- 6) The historical development of the Rumanian Orthodox Church since 1885....
- 7) Accentuation of English loan words in the Serbocroatian speech area.
- 8) Women of the Black Mountain: an anthropological study of the social, political, and economic roles of women in Montenegro.

- 9) The structure of the Soviet archival system.
- 10) Soviet social experiments in the 1920's.
- 11) Analogy in the East Slavic infinitive.
- 12) The role of Hamid Alimjan in the development of the Soviet Uzbek literary community.
- 13) Political attitudes of the Russian nobility during World War I.
- 14) Russian southern expansion: Muscovite relations with the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia, from Ivan III to Boris Godunov.
- 15) Contemporary philosophical developments in aesthetics in the USSR.
- 16) The Soviet-American Symposium on General Problems in Anthropology.

And so on.

As an intellectual proposition, I find the variety of this list highly stimulating. But the two most important things about the list are not visible. Here again we owe thanks to IREX. The first invisible point of the list is that the initiative for these topics, in all their richness, lies with the individual American scholars themselves. The other is that the choice of the topics to be supported from the limited funds available reposes not in an Olympian committee of the state, but in the American scholarly community, as expressed in the peer review process.

This is, I believe, as it should be.

Now, and in the future.

We must rely in these matters of direction and choice on the scholarly community - in its individual and organized expressions. In saying this, I mean to condone neither academic arrogance nor wilful isolation from the broader social conditions of the society in which the academy exists.

It will come as no surprise to this audience that pressures upon the exchanges, upon their content, their method, their very existence, are without cease.

Some of the most regrettable of these pressures are those which combine a well-meaning patriotism with a subconscious disdain for the humanities and a failure to understand what is involved in the exchanges.

I quote a well-known columnist, writing in The Washington Post:

"For most of our history, Americans have been famous for their shrewd business sense and bargaining ability. But in recent years we have been out hustled and outmaneuvered in trade by the Germans, the Japanese, the Russians, and even the Taiwanese. Now there is evidence that we are being hornswoggled in a number of cultural and scientific exchange agreements with the Soviet Union...The practical-minded Soviets send scientists to the United States to pick

our technological brains, but 'the overwhelming majority of American scholars have concerned themselves with Russian history, culture, and linguistics.' "...

Without in the least discounting the value of our scientific exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, I submit that the passage I have just quoted describes in fact a good exchange. For it is in the nature of the given equation that scientists, technicians, are indeed much more influential in Soviet society, and government, than humanists. The underlying purposes of the exchanges are therefore being well served. For those underlying purposes are not a swap of knowledge, or an arithmetic calculation of advantage.

The essential purpose is to increase the depth of understanding and, above all, the accuracy of perception, of the other. On both sides.

Which brings us to the questions of what the exchanges have accomplished and of their impact on this nation's relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Incontestably, the exchanges have produced both quantitative and qualitative changes in American understanding and perceptions of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I referred to quantitative change when I cited the numbers of Americans involved in the exchanges - but the quantitative change I am speaking of is closely allied to the qualitative exchange. That is - I do not know the numbers of young men and women who, in the 1950's, were hastily trained in, say, the Russian language, and then utilized for our various defense needs. But they surely well exceeded 1,500 people. While I do not denigrate even a rudimentary grasp of the Russian language, there is obviously no comparing the understanding and perceptions of those military trainees with those of the IREX alumni. So there has been a quantitative increase in the number of Americans with valuable and authoritative insights into the peoples and societies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Above all, there has been a qualitative change. Marshall Shulman has observed that it is not "sufficiently understood or appreciated in this country... that the political life of the Soviet Union involves a very rich and complex spectrum... There are people who are involved in the system and yet are critical of it in one way or another... There are many forces for change which are not sufficiently appreciated in this country..."

Let me quote Stephen F. Cohen's remarks to that breakfast meeting I mentioned earlier.

"Though I had already worked as a Soviet specialist for more than thirteen years, had visited the USSR several times, and was already an adherent of the 'multi-colored' view of Soviet politics... my stay [as an exchange scholar] enormously enhanced my understanding, alerted me to new things, and generally persuaded me that Soviet realities

were even more complex than I had thought. In regard to my own research I saw, for example, among other things:

----The stunning diversity of opinion and political attitudes among Soviet officials as well as ordinary citizens.

----The importance, and deep-rooted character, of conflicting trends and groups inside and outside the Soviet political establishment.

----The great historical, social, and political dimensions of their domestic problems.

----The important role of social-political factors (nationalism, patriotism, etc.) which are so little noted from afar and which are often obscured by our fixation on Communist ideology."

One of the tragic results of the Russian upheaval, and most particularly of Stalin's reign, was to cut off those Russian cultural ties with the West which had been growing from the time of Peter the Great. The tragedy cut two ways. Russian society and its intellectuals were driven into an enforced and artificial isolation vis-a-vis the West. But this also affected our own perceptions. Russian painting, for example, ceased to be an element in Western artistic conceptions, and thirty years ago the idea that American painters were in fact learning or borrowing from, or were descendants of, Russian painters, would have been met with popular incredulity, if not laughter. But listen to Charlotte Douglas, another IREX alumni speaker at that same breakfast:

"...I spent ten months in the History of Art Department at Moscow State University, working on early Russian abstract art. Shortly after the turn of this century such Russian painters as Kandinsky, Malevich and Lissitzky made the transition from representational art to an art of pure color and form. They are our roots. Abstract painting, which has now developed into a great American art (form) - Newman, Pollack, Rothko, Reinhardt - and which is so brilliantly represented here in Washington at the Hirshorn and National Galleries, began in Moscow and Leningrad before the Revolution and by the 1920's had developed into a major 'school' of art. Since then this Russian work has not been seen..."

Charlotte Douglas also has this to say about the results of studying art history in the Soviet Union:

"Unlike the scientist, the humanist must always set his work in its social context, so that the US/USSR humanities exchange must, for his own purposes, acquire a kind of 'anthropological' knowledge of the Soviet Union. This is far from theoretical information, it must be applied immediately, not only on the level of ideas but on the most mechanical level of conducting research. The

IREX exchanges have, over the years, enabled scholars to acquire an important body of factual data, but in addition to this, the exchanges are responsible for teaching a large and varied group of American professionals the nuts-and-bolts function of the Soviet system, a collective experience from which we, as a nation, derive an increasingly accurate perception of the country and the culture."

As a result of all that has gone before, and in large measure thanks to the continuous efforts of IREX, there are today a host of new opportunities for American humanities research in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and there is a new generation of scholars - on both sides - building on past achievements, probing, getting access to hitherto inaccessible materials.

On the other side, we have witnessed a phenomenon which is also insufficiently understood in this country. This is the growth in the Soviet and East European perceptions of America. As Allen Kassof tells us in his Annual Report, "The miasmic visions of America on which several generations of Soviet citizens were raised during the Stalin years have not only given way to depictions that are at least grudging approximations of the reality, but in some cases are astonishingly accurate and insightful. ...At the upper decision-making levels there is now access to an elaborate, heavily funded, and influential complex of research institutions that, in little more than a decade, has created a veritable army of Americanists. We have seen these people move through the exchanges and return for repeat visits, and can testify that the group includes a number of exceptionally able observers and analysts of the American scene ...There can be no doubt that the Soviet leadership now has at its disposal an impressive array of new perceptions that these programs make possible. Moreover, there is some reason to think that the current leaders are in fact beginning to incorporate these perceptions into their understanding of the United States."

I am particularly taken by the picture evoked by Richard Barnet when, in his book The Giants, he reports that, "An M.I.T. political science professor, Lincoln Bloomfield, has arranged political games in Moscow along the lines of those customarily played at the Pentagon. In a recent game on the Middle East, Anatoly Gromyko, the son of the foreign minister and himself a diplomat, played Sadat."

All this is not to say that the millenium has arrived. History - that mainstay of the humanities - reminds us of the folly of such expectations. But great progress has been made in fulfilling the principal aims of the exchanges - to increase the depth of understanding and the accuracy of perceptions on both sides.

I suspect that the progress made thus far is one of those elements which have played a beneficial role in the course of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in recent years, and I hope that perhaps the panels and discussions which are part of this Conference may cast some light on this.

If in these remarks I seem to refer most often to Soviet examples from the exchanges, it is not in any sense a slight of the work that has been done with Eastern Europe. Our ties with the Eastern European peoples have long and intimate histories. Forty years ago, those states and peoples were culturally and politically distinct and integral figures in the European and Western worlds. Americans could not be comfortable with what followed - I have heard the figure of 20% of our population tracing their origins, many not too long ago, to the East European lands. It is therefore gratifying to note Allen Kassof's comments that "progress [in Eastern Europe] has been more rapid than with the USSR in establishing or re-establishing significant intellectual communication," and that, with respect to the "great variety of the region and the uniqueness of each of its countries...the exchanges have played some part in opening our eyes to those differences, and have helped to modify the earlier, simplistic view of uniformity and homogenization under Soviet postwar control."

I think it is evident to all of us who are concerned with the exchanges that the potentials for the future are a double challenge.

The first stems from the fact that there are more opportunities now than ever before - thanks in good measure, as I said earlier, to the efforts of IREX. These opportunities must not only be seized, they must be pressed even further. Detente must be tested. Soviet scholars have no hesitation in these matters - some have even been here studying the Cuban missile crisis - and American scholars should certainly have none. American scholars' perceptions of research opportunities should not lag behind the reality. It would be a great mistake to engage in any kind of self-censorship in the choice of research topics because of fears about sensitivity, or to recast topics in an effort to accommodate fears about sensitivity.

Fears about sensitive topics are for those who suffer from them, not for those whose purpose is scholarly inquiry. I like those American researchers who, in an effort to trace the awful swath of the Soviet purges in the 1930's, have recently examined the Soviet telephone books of that period.

Another aspect of this first challenge has to do with that lesson to which I pointed at the beginning of these remarks - IREX should not hide its light under a bushel was the larger formulation. But there is a possibility, indeed, a responsibility, for the scholars themselves. They should seek to bring a broader public to share their increased understanding and perceptions. The benefits of the exchanges - again, and I repeat, on both sides - should not be confined to specialists. Neither IREX nor individual American scholars can do anything about broader dissemination of understanding and perceptiveness in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But they can address the problem in this country. Scholars should be aware that there is public interest in their work. There is a responsive audience for their work and observations - business-

men are one part of it - if they will write to that audience.

I am acutely aware of the second part of the double challenge which I have mentioned. It is, of course, the matter of funding of the exchanges. The truth is that we do not know the actual limits of research in these exchanges because we do not have the resources to test them fully. If today we received agreement from the other side on certain fields of research, we would not have the resources to exploit them. We are not even utilizing the range of new opportunities now open to us.

Private support is diminishing. Yet private funding of the exchanges must continue. It is not merely that the American formula of a partnership between the public and private sector is a vital element in maintaining the independence and scholarly integrity of the exchange programs; it is a vital support for the platform from which the scholarly community speaks in these matters. It is also a valuable adjunct in the process of public dissemination of the results of the exchanges. And it is a useful key to the expression and maintenance of public interest in the exchanges.

At the same time, sources of Government funding are faced with increasing, and competing, demands on their resources in a period of relative stringency. Academic exchanges are but one of a number of activities which have legitimate claims on Government funds in the area of international exchanges. And international exchanges are but one of a range of activities with legitimate claims on Government funds in general.

With foresight, good will, accomodation, and most of all, persistent, effective advocacy, I believe the case for greater public support in this area can be made and find response from the Congress.

I have stressed this morning the underlying purposes of the exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe - the increase, on both sides, of the depth of understanding and the accuracy of perceptions. But government, as you know, functions by means of separate charters. The underlying purposes of which I have spoken are drawn and articulated only at certain junctures in our system of government - between the President and the heads of concerned agencies and departments, between the Executive and Legislative Branches. There is nothing in the charter of the National Endowment for the Humanities which permits me to authorize funding of activities because they increase depth of understanding or accuracy of perceptions. The Endowment is, however, required - as I stated earlier - to fulfill certain functions with respect to the humanities and their well-being in the United States. IREX, and the exchange programs that it administers, insofar as they concern the humanities, meet those requirements. We look forward to continued association with you.

Statement of

Mr. Joseph D. Duffey

Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities

before the

Subcommittee on the Department of the Interior
and Related Agencies

of the

Committee on Appropriations

of the

United States Senate

National Endowment for the Humanities

FY 1979 Supplemental and FY 1980 Appropriations Request

Mr. Duffey is accompanied by:

Patricia A. McFate, Deputy Chairman
John Whitelaw, Deputy Chairman for Management
Thomas V. Litzenburg, Jr., Assistant Chairman
Armen Tashdinian, Director, Office of Planning
and Policy Assessment
James H. Blessing, Director, Division of Fellowships
Geoffrey Marshall, Director, Division of Education Programs
Ramon E. Ruiz, Director, Division of Public Programs
Harold C. Cannon, Director, Division of Research Grants
B. J. Stiles, Director, Division of State Programs
Martin E. Sullivan, Division of Special Programs
Joseph R. Schurman, General Counsel
Channing E. Phillips, Congressional Liaison Officer

Statement Submitted for the Record

by

Joseph Duffey
Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities

Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior & Related Agencies
FY 1980 Appropriations Hearings
May 15, 1979

Mr. Chairman:

The winter and spring of each year bring to the National Endowment for the Humanities the tasks of preparing and defending a budget request. At the heart of this request is the need to state the case for public support for scholarship and learning in the humanities.

One can more easily proclaim the importance of the study of the humanities than argue for federal support for such learning. The joys and benefits of what Samuel Johnson once called "taking a second look" at particular human experiences and events are obvious to every one, and are enshrined in the high regard we have for the wisdom of the ages.

But it is harder to suggest how the study of history, of philosophy, of language and literature, is best aided by the federal government. And yet the task of expressing the national interest in these fields of knowledge is one of the most important responsibilities of the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In the past eighteen months as Chairman, I have welcomed this obligation, and traveled widely in the United States to engage

our citizens in debate and discussion about the proper role of the government in cultural activity.

The job of articulating the national interest in the humanities has been complicated by the obscurity of the word "humanities" for most of our citizens outside the universities, by confusion about distinguishing our work from that of the Arts Endowment, and most important, by the very real and serious economic problems facing the institutions which nourish work in the humanities in this country--the declining enrollments at our colleges, the underemployment of recent Ph.D.'s, the shrinking of private philanthropic support.

Perhaps the most difficult obstacle in the path of clarifying why the government should be involved in the sustenance of scholarly and public programs in the humanities has been the attitude that the value of these fields of knowledge is known only by those with the proper training and credentials. That, in other words, the humanities are highly specialized disciplines, which lay people and their representatives in Congress cannot understand very well. That the tough decisions about where scarce federal dollars should go is a matter for insiders to decide, not something which can be a matter for public debate.

I disagree with this viewpoint, and want instead to find a ground for public support of the humanities which is comprehensible and convincing to all our citizens. In seeking such a ground, there is no better place to start than the work of the Endowment itself.

For when you look at what actually happens because of NEH funding, you see immediately how the lives of all Americans are enriched.

To be sure, the Endowment does grant money to museums, libraries, universities and research centers, to civic groups and learned societies. But the real story of the National Endowment for the Humanities is that its grants make it possible for individual American citizens to exercise their curiosity, to ponder age-old dilemmas and modern perplexities, to keep their minds alive to all the great issues about the human condition.

Because of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and projects funded during the last year, for example:

-- Men and women in a dozen different Ozark Mountain communities will be able to view films on the traditional cultural forms of that region and pressing economic and social choices confronted by citizens today.

-- A teacher in a small college in Massachusetts will spend a year writing an account of the literary ferments in Chicago and London at the start of World War I which created a whole new poetic voice in the English speaking world.

-- A young student of American technological history will examine stunning and inventive construction drawings made for the Brooklyn Bridge a century ago.

-- A student in Alaska will consult the first comprehensive dictionary of that state's native languages.

-- College classes in Florida and Nebraska will see for themselves a version of a medieval Spanish mystery play as it has survived since the fourteenth century and been captured on film by the Folger Library.

-- Five hundred youngsters in Watts will come to their Boys Club meetings and learn about the cultures which have contributed to life in contemporary Los Angeles.

-- And one of our most respected historians, now in his eighties, will continue drawing the authoritative account of Thomas Jefferson's life as our third president approached that venerable age himself.

What ties these and the hundreds of other NEH-funded programs together is their common commitment to nurture the curiosity, the mindfulness, the understanding of the American people about human history, culture and social life.

In the federal government, only the National Endowment for the Humanities commits itself fully to encouraging our citizens to devote an hour or a lifetime to understanding. Other agencies support the transmission of technical information and advice, or the acquisition of basic skills in literacy and computation. Some try to make available moments of great beauty to our citizens, or a deeper insight into the properties of matter and energy. But the Humanities Endowment, in assisting both great scholars and elementary-school children, is asking only one question: Is that grant making it possible for our citizens to understand the complexity of our common culture better?

I don't want to pass over the differences between scholars and ordinary citizens, or to minimize the importance of the long periods of schooling and apprenticeship which go into making scholars. But the links between experts and lay people are equally important, especially as they distinguish the humanities from the arts and the sciences. In both those fields, the work of experts is very distant, indeed even impossible, for amateurs to understand.

But in the humanities the curiosity of a layman and a scholar converges in two ways. First, even the most recondite research may be eventually absorbed into the popular literature. It may take generations, as in philology, or only months, as in the recent popular interest in archaeology or American social history.

And secondly, the inquiry of scholars and that of ordinary citizens converges in the great, enduring questions they both ask, in their common endeavor to shape a vision of humanness.

For scholars are doing not only their own work in searching out the narrow corners of their particular disciplines--in finding the roots of Chaucer's poetics or the intricate relationship between capitalism and the state in nineteenth-century Prussia. Each such investigation also is a commentary on our own culture and society, on how our language works or how business and government interact today.

The National Endowment for the Humanities, in its grants both for scholarly and public activities in the humanities, is sponsoring a great national dialogue. I think it is reasonable to expect that those who receive our grants consider them forms of public trust;

they are endowed with the people's money not only to pursue their individual interests but to help build and shape a common culture.

As they go about their work, they help our nation reconsider its fundamental credos, exploring, for example, the competing claims of freedom and obligation, the goodness or finitude of man's environment, or the relative effects of our national and cultural environments in shaping our behavior.

In much more immediate terms, our scholars frame the choices we make every day of our lives. By recovering images of human communities and detailed accounts of how men and women used their spaces, they pose alternatives to contemporary urban planners, developers, public officials, and homeowners. By analyzing how vocational, social and intellectual intentions affect the process of education, they shape the expectations which parents, school administrators, teachers, and taxpayers have for the schooling of our youth. They help us understand our ideals of personal self-sufficiency, and how they are challenged by our best impulses to assist those who suffer in our midst. They show us how our criminal justice system reflects our sense of social cohesion, of tolerance for deviance, of equity and due process.

I am not suggesting that the humanities are to be assessed in utilitarian terms--for they will not solve the practical problems confronting American society. But their help in shaping the terms of our great democratic dialogue, the counterpoint of fact and idea, the ceaseless searching for what is true and beautiful and just, is what makes the humanities precious to all the people of the United

States. It is this role, to ennoble the ideal of democratic citizenship, that is the highest public purpose of the Humanities Endowment.

Thank you.

REMARKS PREPARED FOR COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

BETHANY COLLEGE, BETHANY, WEST VIRGINIA

MAY 26, 1979

BY

JOSEPH DUFFEY, CHAIRMAN

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

THE SHORTEST COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS WITH WHICH I AM FAMILIAR WAS DELIVERED IN 1977 TO THE GRADUATING CLASS AT LAKE FOREST COLLEGE IN ILLINOIS BY AN EMINENT PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR WITH WHOM I AM SURE YOU ARE ALL FAMILIAR, DR. SUESS.

FOR THE OCCASION, UNDERSTANDING THAT HIS PURPOSE WAS TO BRING FORTH WORDS OF WISDOM TO THE GRADUATING CLASS, DR. SUESS COMPOSED A 14 LINE EPIC POEM. HE STOOD UP, READ THE POEM AND

SAT DOWN. AND THIS IS HOW IT WENT.

THE TITLE IS "MY UNCLE TERWILLIGER ON THE ART OF EATING POPOVERS".

"MY UNCLE ORDERED POPOVERS FROM THE RESTAURANT'S BILL OF FARE.

AND WHEN THEY WERE SERVED, HE REGARDED THEM WITH A PENE-
TRATING STARE.

THEN HE SPOKE GREAT WORDS OF WISDOM AS HE SAT THERE ON
THAT CHAIR.

'TO EAT THESE THINGS' SAID MY UNCLE, 'YOU MUST EXERCISE
GREAT CARE.

YOU MAY SWALLOW DOWN WHAT'S SOLID BUT YOU MUST SPIT OUT
THE AIR.'

AND AS YOU PARTAKE OF THE WORLD'S BILL OF FARE, THAT'S
DARN GOOD ADVICE TO FOLLOW:

DO ALOT OF SPITTING OUT OF HOT AIR AND BE CAREFUL OF WHAT
YOU SWALLOW."

NOW IT WAS AT THAT POINT THAT DR. SUESS WAS FINISHED,
BUT I HOPE YOU WILL PERMIT ME TO GO ON FOR A FEW MINUTES!

THIS IS A PROUD DAY FOR ALL OF YOU'. A DAY OF ACHIEVE-
MENT.

MANY OF US HERE, TEACHERS AS WELL AS PARENTS, HAVE MEM-
ORIES OF THE EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH IN RECENT
WEEKS.

WHILE YOU WERE IN THE MIDST OF YOUR WORK, RACING TO MEET
DEADLINES FOR FINAL EXAMS - WISHING THAT YOU HAD THREE MORE

DAYS TO PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON A TERM PAPER - IT WAS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT THE DAY WOULD FINALLY ARRIVE AND THERE WOULD BE NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT TO SAVOR YOUR TRIUMPH AND TO CELEBRATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENT.

THIS IS THAT DAY, AND ALL OF YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN IF FROM TIME TO TIME YOU EXPRESS A LONG, AUDIBLE SIGH OF RELIEF!

AND SO MY FIRST WORDS TO THE CLASS OF 1979 AND TO THEIR PROUD PARENTS AND FAMILIES, IS SIMPLY, CONGRATULATIONS.

I APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGE OF SHARING THIS OCCASION WITH YOU AND I WANT TO USE IT TO ASK YOU TO CONSIDER THE MEANING OF ACHIEVEMENT, OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND OF THE LIMITS OF ACHIEVEMENT.

YOU HAVE EARNED TWO AWARDS TODAY, BUT THE COLLEGE WILL

ONLY GIVE YOU ONE OF THEM. FOR ALL YOUR LONG HOURS OF LABOR AND SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS IN ANALYZING PROBLEMS AND IN WRITING, BETHANY CAN ONLY GIVE YOU AN OUTWARD SIGN OF ACHIEVEMENT - A DIPLOMA AND A DEGREE.

PERHAPS ANOTHER AND ULTIMATELY TRUER TEST OF YOUR ACHIEVEMENT WILL BE YOUR OWN. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT WE CELEBRATE TODAY?

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH WHAT YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

COULD YOU HAVE DONE MORE?

DO YOU THINK IT WAS WORTH DOING AS MUCH AS YOU DID? "

IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, THEY MAY INDEED LEAD TO A TRUER SENSE OF HOW WELL YOU HAVE PERFORMED.

BUT DECIDING WHAT QUESTIONS ARE APPROPRIATE TO ASK IS

ALMOST AS HARD AS ANSWERING ANY OF THEM. IN THE END, WE ARE OFTEN LEFT AS CONFUSED AS WE WERE BEFORE, ONLY A BIT MORE WILLING TO LET OTHER PEOPLE JUDGE US AND YET, THE MOST IMPORTANT JUDGEMENTS IN THIS AREA ARE THOSE YOU MAKE YOURSELF.

THERE IS MUCH THAT WE CAN LEARN ABOUT OUR OWN ACHIEVEMENTS IF WE LEAVE ASIDE FOR A MOMENT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THEY ARE GOOD ENOUGH.

I WOULD LIKE IN THE FEW MINUTES I HAVE, TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN TWO KINDS OF ACHIEVEMENT, TWO KINDS OF CHALLENGE AND FINALLY, TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE.

THIS IS WHAT I WILL CALL TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT, BY WHICH I MEAN THE PROCESS OF FOLLOWING A PLAN TO REACH A GOAL.

ON ONE LEVEL, GRADUATION FROM COLLEGE IS A TECHNICAL ACHIEVE-

MENT. WHEN YOU CAME TO BETHANY FOUR YEARS AGO - MAYBE SOME OF YOU CAME FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO AND IN THAT CASE, YOU DESERVE EVEN MORE CONGRATULATIONS TODAY! - YOU CONFRONTED A CHALLENGE WHICH WAS LAID BEFORE YOU IN CLEAR TERMS, A SET OF REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION, A COURSE OF STUDY.

IN A SENSE, YOUR TASK WAS TO TRY TO FILL IN SOME GAPS IN YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE.

THEY WERE SEVERAL WAYS OF FULFILLING EACH REQUIREMENT - BY TAKING THIS COURSE OR THAT ONE.

SOME STUDENTS, BY DINT OF NATIVE TALENT, DISCIPLINE, AND EFFORT, FOUND MEETING THE PRESCRIBED REQUIREMENTS EASIER THAN OTHERS DID.

SOME MET THE REQUIREMENTS WITH GREAT SKILL, OTHERS ONLY BY THE SKIN OF THEIR TEETH. (I SUSPECT THAT MOST OF YOU HAD

A BIT OF EACH OF THOSE EXPERIENCES!)

THERE ARE MANY IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN LIFE WHICH INVOLVE FULFILLING TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS.

THERE IS NOTHING SIMPLE OR EASY ABOUT TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENTS. THEY REQUIRE SKILL AND DISCIPLINE AND OFTEN, GREAT DETERMINATION.

DOING ONE'S WORK AS IT IS OUTLINED IN A COURSE OF STUDY, OR FOLLOWING A MANUAL OR GUIDE BOOK, IS NOT TO BE DESPISED.

I WAS GLAD FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE PILOT WHO BROUGHT MY WIFE AND SONS AND ME FROM WASHINGTON THIS MORNING WAS A TECHNICALLY SKILLED PROFESSIONAL. I AM GLAD THAT HE KNEW HOW TO READ A MAP, FIND THE AIRPORT AND WOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO IF SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG.

NOW I SUSPECT THAT MANY OF YOU HAVE AMONG YOUR GOALS AND DREAMS TODAY, OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS THAT WILL REQUIRE FURTHER HARD WORK, DISCIPLINE AND FOLLOWING A SET COURSE.

PERHAPS YOU ASPIRE TO A GRADUATE DEGREE.

OR A PARTICULAR JOB.

OR TO LIVE IN A PARTICULAR KIND OF HOME, OR TO WRITE A BOOK, OR TO TRAVEL TO SOME PART OF THE WORLD.

ALL OF THESE GOALS ARE WORTHWHILE. NONE ARE LIKELY TO COME WITHOUT SACRIFICE AND HARD WORK.

BUT PERHAPS YOU ALSO ASPIRE TO OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS THAT ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO DEFINE WITH PRECISION. ACHIEVEMENTS OF A DIFFERENT ORDER. ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH POSE A DIFFERENT CHALLENGE AND CALL FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE.

YOU ASPIRE TO BE WELL THOUGHT OF BY YOUR FRIENDS AND IN YOUR COMMUNITY; TO ACHIEVE A MEASURE OF CONTENTMENT, OF JOY AND SATISFACTION IN YOUR LIFE'S WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS, OR TO ACHIEVE WHAT WE CALL WISDOM AND A SENSE OF UNDERSTANDING.

THESE TOO ARE WORTHY ASPIRATIONS AND THEY ARE SHARED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER BY ALL MEN AND WOMEN. BUT THEY ARE MORE SUBJECTIVE THAN TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENTS. THEY ARE MORE SUBTLE, ELUSIVE GOALS AND IT IS MORE DIFFICULT, PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE, TO EVER SAY YOU HAVE REACHED THESE GOALS, THOUGH WE CAN SURELY SAY THAT SOME MEN AND WOMEN SEEM TO HAVE BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL IN THESE MATTERS THAN OTHERS.

THE KIND OF LEARNING, THE KIND OF KNOWLEDGE - THE PATH TO THESE KINDS OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF WHICH I NOW SPEAK - IS OF A DIFFERENT ORDER FROM TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING.

THERE ARE FINALLY, NO CLEARLY MARKED PATHS, NO MAPS,
NO TECHNICAL MANUALS AVAILABLE TO CHART THE WAY TO THESE
OTHER KINDS OF ACHIEVEMENTS.

THERE WILL NOT COME A TIME WHEN YOU WILL RECEIVE A DIP-
LOMA IN RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF WISDOM AND SELF-
UNDERSTANDING.

THESE ACHIEVEMENTS INVOLVE SEEKING THE KIND OF KNOWLEDGE
FOR WHICH THERE ARE FEW HYPOTHESES, NO MATHEMATICAL FORMULAS,
NO DIRECT PATHS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF TALK THESE DAYS
ABOUT SELF-DISCOVERY.

THE SALE OF BOOKS ABOUT SELF-DISCOVERY, AND THE GROWTH
OF ORGANIZATIONS DEVOTED TO SELF-FULFILLMENT IN RECENT YEARS,
TESTIFIES TO HOW MANY PEOPLE SEEK THESE GOALS.

BUT SELF-FULFILLMENT DOESN'T COME FROM FOLLOWING A PLAN.

PERHAPS THE WORST WAY TO ACHIEVE SELF-FULFILLMENT IS TO SEEK IT.

"PERHAPS THE WORST WAY TO ACHIEVE SELF-ACHIEVEMENT IS TO
SEEK IT. THE WORST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF IS TO GO AROUND LOOK-
ING FOR YOURSELF AS THOUGH YOU HAD ROLLED INTO A FORGOTTEN
CORNER OR SLIPPED THROUGH A CRACK IN THE FLOOR." (FRANKEL)

IF THE EXPERIENCE OF GREAT MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE GONE
ON BEFORE US AND WHO SEEM TO HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES AS WE PUT
IT TODAY - IN PREVIOUS YEARS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN CALLED SAL-
VATION OR ENLIGHTENMENT - IF ALL THAT MEANS ANYTHING TODAY,
IT SEEMS TO ADD UP TO THE FACT THAT "YOU DISCOVER YOURSELF BY
DISCOVERING OTHER THINGS - THINGS OUTSIDE YOURSELF - THINGS
THAT HAVE GONE INTO MAKING YOU WHAT YOU ARE - THINGS YOU HAVE

OBLIGATIONS TOWARD." (FRANKEL)

IF THE TRUE LITERATURE OF SELF-DISCOVERY FROM THE PAST MEANS ANYTHING TODAY, IT SEEMS TO TELL US THAT IT IS ONLY AS WE OVERCOME THE PROVINCIALISM OF OUR OWN NARROW PERSPECTIVES AND ARE LIBERATED FROM OUR OWN PASSIONS AND IMPULSES AND BECOME LESS INVOLVED IN OURSELVES, THAT WE COME TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY AND ASTONISHMENT AND JOY IN BEING ALIVE.

AND PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST SIGNIFICANT THEME ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE, IS THAT INEVITABLY, WE COME TO UNDERSTAND THE LIMITS OF OUR OWN ACHIEVEMENTS AND SEE THEM IN PERSPECTIVE.

FOR EVERY WAY OF SEEING THE WORLD IS NOT MY OWN INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT BUT A WAY OF ASSOCIATING MYSELF WITH CERTAIN TRADITIONS OF THOUGHT, OF LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE ME, AND OF TAPPING A HERITAGE.

THE MORE I THINK ABOUT THE WORLD, THE MORE I REALIZE
THAT MY VIEW OF IT IS SHAPED BY AND CORRESPONDS TO THE VIEWS
OF MY TEACHERS - PLATO, MONTAIGNE, JEFFERSON, JOHN DEWEY,
HANNAH ARENDT, ST. PAUL AND MARTIN LUTHER, AND MARTIN LUTHER
KING.

WE COME ALSO TO REALIZE THAT THERE ARE TRADITIONS OTHER
THAN OUR OWN.

FOR EVERY INCLINATION I HAVE TOWARDS PLATO, I KNOW THERE
IS AN ARISTOTELIAN ALTERNATIVE. FOR EVERY JEFFERSONIAN IN-
STINCT TOWARD EQUALITY, I KNOW THERE IS A HAMILTONIAN ARGU-
MENT FOR COMPETITIVE ENERGY.

I SPEAK OF THE CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE WITH THE
PAST; WITH YOUR OWN HERITAGE TO KNOW IT AND THROUGH IT, TO
REFLECT UPON YOUR LIFE.

I SUSPECT THAT BETHANY COLLEGE IS STILL THE KIND OF COLLEGE AND THIS IS STILL THE KIND OF FACULTY THAT I REMEMBER NOT TOO MANY DECADES AGO AND THAT THIS FACULTY AND COLLEGE HAVE TRIED TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE RESOURCES FOR THESE CAPACITIES.

IF YOU HAVE LEARNED SOME OF THESE SKILLS AND HABITS IN YOUR YEARS HERE, YOU ARE MOST FORTUNATE.

IF YOU HAVE NOT, IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO BEGIN.

THERE IS AN OLD TRADITION AT GRADUATION TIME FROM THE ANCIENT DAYS OF THE MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITY.

THE PRESIDENT SAYS TO THE GRADUATING CLASS, "I WELCOME YOU TO THE COMPANY OF EDUCATED MEN AND WOMEN." WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE EDUCATED, TO ATTAIN INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT?

ALBERT CAMUS ONCE SAID IT BRILLIANTLY AND CONCISELY; AN INTELLECTUAL IS A PERSON WHO WATCHES HIMSELF WHILE HE WORKS."

NOW THANK GOODNESS IN THAT SENSE, VERY FEW OF US ARE INTELLECTUALS ALL THE TIME. IT WOULD BE UTTERLY UNBEARABLE! BUT TO BE ABLE ON OCCASION TO REFLECT UPON YOUR LIFE, TO STEP BACK AND GAIN PERSPECTIVE, TO ENTER INTO DIALOGUE THROUGH BOOKS AND IDEAS WITH THOSE WHO HAVE GONE ON BEFORE US, IS TO COME TO KNOW THE CHALLENGE - THE TROUBLING PERPLIXITY - BUT ALSO THE FREEDOM AND JOY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.

IT IS TO SENSE YOURSELF AS PART OF A GREAT COMPANY AND NOT SIMPLY A LONELY PILGRIM.

THE UTLIMATE LESSON AND MEANING OF SUCH AN EXERCISE IS A KIND OF MODESTY, FOR WE COME TO SEE THAT THERE IS ALWAYS A STRONG AND VITAL TRADITION OF THOUGHT OPPOSING OUR OWN

POINT OF VIEW.

AND WHEN WE SEE OUR OWN WORK AS A PART OF A CONTINUING TRADITION AND LEARN TO STEP AWAY FROM IT ON OCCASION AND SEE IT AFRESH, WE BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THAT A PERSON IS NEVER MERELY DEFINED BY HIS OR HER JOB, OR THE PRODUCTS OF HIS OR HER LABOR, OR SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS.

BUT EACH INDIVIDUAL BEING IS A SPIRIT ASSOCIATED MOMENTARILY WITH THOSE PARTICULAR FORMS OF LIFE'S EXPRESSION. WHILE WE MAY BE PROUD OF WHAT WE DO AND THE HONORS WE ACHIEVE, WE SHOULD ALWAYS THINK OF WHAT WE ARE WITH A BIT OF IRONY AND HUMOR.

THE ADMIRATION WE HAVE FOR WORK WELL DONE IS DIFFERENT FROM THE RESPECT THAT WE ACCORD TO EVERY PERSON'S BEING.

THESE THEN ARE TWO WAYS OF THINKING, OF SOLVING PROBLEMS AND

TWO KINDS OF ACHIEVEMENT. OBVIOUSLY, I WOULD LIKE TO URGE UPON YOU AS YOU THINK OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUR COLLEGE YEARS AND OF YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE, THE PURSUIT OF REFLECTION, OF WISDOM, OF WHAT I THINK IN CONTRAST TO TECHNICAL LEARNING, MAY BE DESCRIBED AS HUMANE LEARNING.

I HOPE YOU WILL CONSIDER BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE HOW YOUR WORK DURING THESE COLLEGE YEARS WAS A PROCESS OF DISCOVERY WHICH IS NOT OVER, A SEARCH FOR MEANING WHICH CONTINUES.

I WANT TO URGE YOU TO LOOK NOW AND IN THE FUTURE FOR THE ROOTS OF YOUR OWN ACHIEVMENT IN THE WORK OF OTHERS: IN YOUR FAMILY BACKGROUND, IN YOUR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE, IN YOUR RELIGIOUS OR ETHNIC HERITAGE, IN THE TRADITIONS OF CULTURE WHICH WE ALL SHARE.

I URGE YOU TO CONSIDER, FOR THE PURPOSES OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND IDEAL, OPPOSING YOUR OWN VIEW AND TO GIVE IT MUCH RESPECT AND TO LEARN FROM TO TIME TO TIME TO DISASSOCIATE YOURSELF FROM THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE.

I DID NOT HOWEVER, COME HERE TODAY SIMPLY TO PASS ALONG PERSONAL ADVICE. FINALLY, I WANT TO ASK YOU ALSO TO CONSIDER HOW THIS DIVISION BETWEEN TECHNICAL AND HUMANE LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE IS REFLECTED IN OUR PUBLIC LIFE.

WE LIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED TECHNICAL SOCIETY MORE AND MORE OF THE DECISIONS ABOUT EVERYDAY LIFE IN OUR NATION ARE PASSING INTO THE DOMAIN OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS WHO OFTEN SPEAK A LANGUAGE WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

THE GOALS AND METHODS OF THE TECHNICIANS ARE ALWAYS TOO NARROW PROBLEMS THEY FACE SO THAT ANSWERS CAN BE INFERRED FROM THEIR QUESTIONS.

Commencement Address

City College of New York

Prepared for Commencement Exercises

1979
Sunday, June 10, 3:30 p.m.

by

Joseph Duffey

Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities

We have lived through a marvelous and difficult time in American education during the last three decades. To read a novel about American college life before 1950 is to step into a vanished world. A world with trolley cars but no paperbacks, with fountain pens but no portable radios. But more important, a quiet, self-contained world, which was almost entirely white and male. In an industrial society, its architecture was medieval, monastic, or manorial. It had little to do with the forty-hour work week; its clock ticked to the semester hour and the football quarter. It was isolated, particularly in its dreams, from the rest of American society.

Especially since the late 1950's, colleges have been near the center of national attention almost constantly--since Sputnik, the expansion of public funding for higher education, student power, minority programs, open enrollment, affirmative action, and competency testing. Every problem in American society has cast its shadow onto our campuses. Given the continuing financial strains upon our schools and colleges, it long ago became more and more difficult to maintain the old ideal of

of an academic world detached from social concerns and political pressures.

Of all the institutions in American higher education which have felt the brunt of these events, City College has been among the most powerfully affected. Even a generation before 1950, City College was a national proving-ground for bringing higher education to a "first generation" of New Yorkers. And here, more than anywhere else, began the great American experiment of the last thirty years--the expansion of the opportunity for a college education to new and previously excluded portions of our populace.

Going to college used to be fairly rare in the United States, as it still is in many countries of the world. In 1950, only 1/7 of the American people aged 18 to 22 were enrolled in college; today that proportion has grown to almost 1/2 of the college age population. } not clear

Amid the trials of American higher education, it is hard, sometimes, to see the extraordinary revolution this has entailed. Going to college has had an enormous impact upon the economic prospects of Americans, upon their ability to participate in the wider cultural world, and upon their sense of themselves as members of a technically sophisticated universe.

Mass higher education has its limitations. But its graduates can live lives of greater richness and opportunity than was available to their parents and grandparents.

As the numbers of students have increased, American colleges have changed. Colleges are often devoted to traditional values,

and they are not easily or painlessly transformed. But they could hardly have absorbed all these new students without making great changes. Some describe those changes as a decline, or even a collapse, of academic standards. But such an assessment is far too narrow and too often a self-serving.

First, the world of higher education has brought its teaching much closer to the concerns of everyday life. This is most obviously seen in the proliferation of new professional training programs in colleges--often in fields which didn't exist thirty years ago--Health Records Management, Communications, Wildlife Administration, Urban Economics, Arts Administration, Computer Science. In addition, quasi-vocational fields like Education, Advertising, Social Work, and Nursing have expanded tremendously during the same period.

Furthermore, even in the liberal arts, there is now much more scholarly interest in everyday life--in the social history of working people, in the philosophy of ordinary language, in the behavioral development of children and adults.

Correspondingly, the knowledge we depend on for carrying on our everyday lives has been "academized," if I may use that word. Old rules of thumb about rearing children, raising crops, and keeping track of things are now challenged by the findings of scholars and experts. It used to be, as late as the New Deal Congressional hearings, for example, that expert testimony was that delivered by mechanics, farmers, and teachers. Now "experts" are those with book learning--mechanical engineers,

agronomists, econometricians--with formulae, extrapolations, models, and other pieces of technical paraphernalia.

Such abstraction and specialization have also invaded the precincts of the humanities. A scholar of Wordsworth's poetry simply doesn't have the time to re-read Chaucer or Faulkner very often--there is just too much Wordsworth criticism to keep up with. Historians, too, now speak of "methodologies" and "theoretical approaches" in ways which make students, or even colleagues in other departments, feel completely lost.

Sometimes I think we have succeeded in focusing attention on our immediate surroundings at the cost of making mysteries of what we ~~used~~ to think was familiar.

Second, we have changed the way we teach. Despite many exceptions, college teaching is much more concerned with the learning process of students that it was thirty years ago. We now idealize the active student, and prize his or her self-motivation, creativity, imagination, ^{and} resourcefulness, and ~~stick to it-ive-ness.~~

In most disciplines, we care less that students master all the details of a subject than that they should know how to solve its problems. The lecture is now defended as a demonstration of a scholar's method of thinking rather than a way of transmitting information.

The only way to learn to do something, we often say, is to do it, and so students spend more time than ever in case studies, laboratory experiments, field work, internships and

apprenticeships. The classroom is to be brought closer to the "real world," that is, to the "world of work".

We distrust our own scholarship, even as we produce it. Instead of reading critical articles and monographs, or even textbooks, students should have "first-hand" acquaintance with the phenomena they study. We want them to examine primary sources in history, and to read literary and philosophical works in the original, if possible.

We want our students to have an original, unmediated relationship with the universe of knowledge, to muse like Thoreau in front of classical poetry and modern motorcycles, and to have original thoughts. We expect them to interpret original sources, not (as formerly) to explicate them. New knowledge is the best knowledge, and even freshmen, it is claimed may discover "new truths".

And third, our higher education has begun to accommodate itself to the complexity of our cultural pluralism. Every culture has its blind spots, but from the perspective of thirty years it still seems surprising that American academic culture was so blind to all but a narrow vein of our heritage. Courses in Western history tended to celebrate the triumph of secular, Enlightenment rationalism over Catholic superstition and evangelical enthusiasm. The history of family, of work, of community life, was virtually unknown. Women, minorities, and ethnic groups were interpreted chiefly through studies of the "attitudes" of the established, white, mostly male voices. There was a sort of benign tolerance toward the customs of so-called

primitive peoples. Folk culture was often understood to have been an ancient phenomenon in advanced, industrial societies. Political science tended to use active, aggressive verbs to describe the "activity" of political leaders, and passive, acquiescent ones to account for the "behavior" of citizens.

For many years, scholars of modern literature and art have known that classic works do not carry their own authority, in the way the Homeric epics, the Bible, and the Aeneid did in their original communities. To the question, "Is this work true?" the German poet Goethe says we have to add another, "Is it true for me?" Small wonder, then, that to the traditional classics of Western art, we now need to grant the status of classics to other works which are profoundly true to many of our citizens. Understanding the personal truth conveyed in the treasures of African, of Asian, of Latin American and other non-Western European cultures is a way of extending our powers of analysis and insight, of broadening our vision of human possibility and limits. That is the great gift of this new acceptance of cultural pluralism in American life.

I celebrate these three transforming forces in American higher education. I know that some are bemoaning a decline in standards of literacy and civility on college campuses, and call for a return to the good old days.

But it would be absurd and misguided to return to a form of education so much divorced from our contemporary concerns. Where education was a badge of social respectability, rather

than an initiation into social awareness and complexity. Where some educators spoke glibly about developing "character" and "taste" and "judgement," instead of knowledge and ability. Where an artificial homogeneity was thrown over the diversity of American life, masking the conflicts and contradictions which each of us feels. Where hours and days were wasted in rote memorization and student exercises, always defended--like cod liver oil--as being good for students. It is good to be free from all that.

But while I value the innovations of the past three or four decades, I am deeply troubled by some of their consequences. Each of these three forces begins as an impulse toward liberation, but each may lead to self-indulgence, isolation, and narcissism. The proliferation of academic specialties and subspecialties, each with its own technical jargon, has made it difficult for scholars and students in other fields to understand the progress of academic work; this is mirrored in nonacademic life, as well, in which the claims of professionals and experts are increasingly difficult for laymen and laywomen to challenge.

An emphasis upon participatory learning and original interpretations has led some students to blur the distinction between facts and opinions, and to claim that their conclusions were equal in soundness to their teachers'. Such a claim seems to set the teacher's years of training and experience at naught. Just as bad, it leaves the student with no way of

validating the quality of his or her own work.

And our greater tolerance for cultural pluralism has in some instances led to a narrowing, rather than a broadening, of cultural interests. Some have used the need to become acquainted with their own cultural backgrounds as a chauvinistic excuse to ignore those of others.

As a result of these tendencies and contradictions, modern higher education is often fragmented and incoherent. It is a little of this, a little of that, a hodgepodge. As you graduate today, you are being welcomed into "the company of educated men and women." But what does that mean precisely? Each of you probably has had some individual purpose in pursuing a college degree. But what common purpose do we all share? What common expectation do we all have for the education of college students?

A British friend once commented that the great English public schools like Eton and Harrow were the most democratic educational institutions in the world. They would take any young lad from the "upper" social classes, he explained, no matter how limited his intellectual capacities, and see to it that he mastered Latin and Greek and calculus.

Granted that Eton and Harrow are the most unlikely models for American higher education, still I feel we lack some equivalent to their common expectations for each student, some expression of our democratic faith in the minds of our students. I do not mean a standard of minimal competency, or some lowest

common denominator of passing ability.

Establishing a sense of common purpose in higher education will be a difficult task. American colleges and universities are numerous, complicated, and remarkably diverse. But the recent development of new core curriculum projects in several colleges, as well as the minimum competency standards enacted in many states, are signs that the centrifugal tendency in higher education is finally ending.

Some would like to return nostalgically to the days when college teaching was like a private club, and when Western culture seemed to have a "wholeness" which is missing today. Such a past, I think, has no future--it may never even have had a past.

Instead, we need to accept the rich innovations of the post-World War II years, and work to reintegrate their fragmenting impulses.

All our diverse specialties, for example, share a common core of intellectual and moral assumptions. These need to be redefined and studied. Every modern city planning project to take one example, is based upon certain operating assumptions, certain visions of the human condition, which is shared with work in other disciplines--with a sense of the ethos of colonial villages in New England, perhaps, or an ethnographic study of South Sea Islanders. Advanced students and senior scholars, as well as college freshmen, will need to spend more time exploring these areas of commonality among academic

disciplines.

Our new patterns of participatory learning must lead us to issues more complex than vocational training. Role-playing as professional practitioners has to include aspiring to professional standards of excellence. Classes in these studies must become true investigative teams, sharing the burdens of disciplined inquiry--not laying them aside.

Finally, we need to take cultural pluralism seriously as a subject worthy of disciplined study. The experience of bilingualism, or of membership in a racial minority, is an inextricable part of being an American--for members of the majority as well as for minorities. Accommodation to the established culture in a technologically sophisticated world ~~has to be understood as a universal~~, shared, and painfully disconcerting experience for all of our students.

There are cynics who think all this impossible, unnecessary, and unwise. They would rather turn every complexity of modern life into an excuse to stop caring about what happens to other people.

But the true heroes of our age are those working toward this new coalescence in culture, helping to build, piece by piece and moment by moment, a shared understanding of our world.

In the last six months, we have lost two such heroes, both of them New York college teachers, Mina Shaughessey of City College and Charles Frankel of Columbia. Mina Shaughessey took the teaching of basic skills not as a technical problem

but as an entry into the most interesting questions of cognitive development and social pluralism. Charles Frankel looked at the great philosophical dilemmas of modern man; but rather than draw from them only philosophical puzzles for other specialists to work on, he showed how they shaped the ordinary perceptions and activities of all our people.

From such teachers, we can learn to cherish a culture which is inclusive and still clear, active and still mindful.

Our most urgent task is to see our knowledge as a basis for community, not for isolation, to see our educational process as an enlargement and not a narrowing. We don't want students to turn their backs on the communities from which they have come but to use their educations to understand those communities better. To see their specialties of knowledge as based upon shared convictions about rationality, civility, and moral concern.

I remember once hearing a recent immigrant from Puerto Rico express our continuing American dream and our continuing American dilemma very well.

Above all things, he said, what this country most needed was a "fifth freedom, the freedom to get ahead in life, the freedom to be like anybody else." The paradox and the challenge of American life is to join together this dream of success and this hope of community. Those who have begun to sense that in America today "getting ahead" has become a collective venture--and they are an increasing company--have, I believe come to the most profound and hopeful insight of our time.

Singer,

Some years ago, when I lived in Hartford, I was a frequent patron of a local Jewish restaurant. Greeted each time by my waiter, whom I will call Abe, I spent a few minutes puzzling over the long columns of delicacies. And the combinations, how much more puzzling they were: a little soup and many latkes, lots of soup and a few latkes. It was hopeless, and when Abe would see me reach a critical point of confusion, he would saunter over.

"Mr. Duffey, today ~~you-would-like-eppes~~--- we have eppes some fish." That eppes was a powerful word. It was said proudly, formidably. In Yiddish, it is a supple word, meaning something, or maybe, or for some inexplicable reason. In that restaurant, it promised to unlock some unimaginable treasure, some special something, which was exactly what I needed and wanted.

I was never disappointed. From the first savorings of the dishes carried in to the lingering aftertastes in every corner of my palate, I loved what Abe brought me. And, so, I was eager to thank him. To which he would inevitably reply, his shoulders shrugging, "Nu veden?"

Nu veden was every bit as wonderful a word as eppes. It meant, I learned, what did you expect, how could you have thought it would turn out otherwise? Isn't that the way the world is?

When I was invited to introduce Isaac Bashevis Singer tonight, I thought of those two Yiddish words. Every Singer story, I think, is eppes a story. ~~Like a story, I think, is eppes a story.~~

Singer,

Every one invites us to the wildest, most splendid treats of human fantasy and imagination, the boldest flights of aspiration and passion, the most bizarre and intricate sets of circumstances. And, yet, at the end, each of them brings us back to this world, almost fatalistically, with a "nu veden?" Did you not think that the world included such things? Who are you to conceive of a world in which God could not have made these things happen?

As Singer writes in one of his tales, "Things happen in life so fantastic that no imagination could have invented them."

So there is no getting around this man, no simplifying him. So deftly does he play with all the possibilities of humankind, and so philosophically does he weave them into the fabric of the only world we recognize.

Thus, though Isaac Singer has written of a world which has vanished, and written about it with a concreteness which can only come from the most extraordinary visual and aural memory, his work is never nostalgic. In fact, he uses the streets of Warsaw and the shtetls of rural Poland as only an artist can--not by being true to them, but by being true to himself, and true to us.

Would-you;-then;-know In this, he bears within him not only those extraordinary memories, but more, the greatest traditions of Western literature. Would you seek a modern counterpart to Turgenev or Tolstoy in seeing small people swept up in huge historical changes? Turn to Singer. Would you look for someone who could evoke a world of neighbors in the manner of Balzac or Chekhov? Turn to Singer. Would

Singer,

you doubt that modern writers could deal with the nineteenth-century's great ambivalence about demonic personalities which lay beneath the stories of Dostoevsky or Hawthorne or Melville? Turn, again, to Singer.

And, finally, if you would like to hear--in your own lifetime--a writer of this sort account for his life and craft, then, tonight, you can turn to Isaac Bashevis Singer.

In my role at the National Endowment for the Humanities, I am constantly made aware of how few are the ranks of humanists, and how great the numbers of commentators upon them. It is my greatest privilege to present you eppes a humanist, Isaac Bashevis Singer.

REMARKS PREPARED FOR HISPANIC LUNCHEON
BY JOSEPH DUFFEY

EARLY IN THE 19TH CENTURY, A GERMAN HISTORIAN
AND NATURALIST, ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLT PUBLISHED AN
ACCOUNT OF HIS TRAVELS IN THE NEW WORLD.

HUMBOLT WAS A MODEL OF ENLIGHTENMENT -- A SOPH-
ISTICATED MAN OF LEARNING AND CULTURE. HE TRAVELED
EXTENSIVELY IN LATIN AMERICA AS WELL AS IN THE UNITED
STATES.

IN MEXICO CITY, HUMBOLT WAS ENTRANCED BY THE
INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING HE FOUND THERE; THE ACADEMY
OF FINE ARTS AND THE SCHOOL OF MINES TO TAKE ONLY
TWO EXAMPLES. HE PRAISED THE HIGH CULTURE OF THAT
CITY AND HE WROTE, IN ABOUT THE YEAR 1810;

THERE IS "NO CITY IN THE NEW WORLD - NOT EXCEPTING THE UNITED STATES WHICH HAS SCIENTIFIC ESTABLISHMENTS AS LARGE OR AS SOLID AS THOSE" IN THE CAPITAL OF MEXICO.

I BELIEVE HUMBOLT'S OBSERVATION HAS BEEN APPRECIATED OVER THE YEARS BY THOSE OF US WHO HAVE FOUND OUR OWN CULTURAL PROVINCIALISMS CHALLENGED BY A VISIT TO MEXICO CITY WHERE WE ENCOUNTER A RICH CIVILIZATION WHICH FLOURISHED LONG BEFORE JAMESTOWN, PLYMOUTH ROCK OR EVEN THE MOST PRIMITIVE ORIGINS OF OUR OWN COUNTRY.

HUMBOLT'S JUDGEMENT IN THIS OBSERVATION IS WORTH
RECALLING THESE DAYS AS WE STRUGGLE TO FIND A NEW
VISION OF THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE UNITED STATES.
TOO OFTEN WE SPEAK OF ACCOMODATING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS
TO A FULLY ESTABLISHED AND RICH CULTURE AS IF THEY WERE
TO BE THE PASSIVE PARTICIPANTS AND RECIPIENTS ONLY IN
THE PROCESS.

THERE IS ABROAD IN OUR LAND OUR DEEPLY ROOTED
SUSPICION THAT DIES HARD THAT SUGGEST THAT SOMEHOW
THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IMPLIES
A WATERING DOWN OR THE WEAKENING OF OUR CULTURAL
LIFE.

THE ABSURDITY AND WORSE, THE CHAUVINISM OF THIS SUSPICION IS WITNESSED IN HUMBOLT'S COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGING THE COMPLEXITY OF LATIN AMERICA'S INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND CAN ONLY ENRICH THE OTHER TRADITIONS WHICH HAVE SO CONVENIENTLY DOMINATED NORTH AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL LIFE FOR 3 1/2 CENTURIES. THAT KIND OF OFFICIAL -- UNOFFICIAL -- ESTABLISHED CULTURE WHICH REIGNED IN THIS NATION FOR SO LONG UNTIL ITS SPELL WAS BROKEN AND CHALLENGED IN RECENT YEARS.

ALL THE GREAT QUESTIONS OF THE HUMANITIES ABOUT HUMAN DIGNITY, ABOUT FREEDOM AND DEPRESSION, ABOUT MAN'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HIS WORLD AND THE LANGUAGES HE USES TO DESCRIBE THAT KNOWLEDGE, ABOUT THE CONFLICT OF

TRADITIONS IN CONTEMPORARY INOVATIONS. ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS WERE AS MUCH A PART OF HISPANIC-AMERICAN CONSCIOUSNESS AS THEY ARE OF ANGLO-AMERICAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS -- EVEN THOUGH THE PERCEPTION AND ANSWERS MAY HAVE DIFFERED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

IN ADDITION TO THIS, LATIN AMERICAN MAY SERVE AS WELL AS A PATH TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY WITHIN THAT REGION FOR THERE ARE PROBABLY AS MANY DIFFERENT NATIONAL VARIATIONS WITHIN THE SINGLE LABEL OF "HISPANIC-AMERICAN" AS THERE ARE ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES. AND WITHIN EACH OF THESE NATIONS OF COURSE, THERE ARE COMPETING NATIVE

AMERICAN, AFRICAN, EAST INDIAN, SPANISH, PORTUGUESE
AND OTHER EUROPEAN TRADITIONS.

IN THE MODERN WORLD, CULTURE IS NOT EASILY PASSED
DOWN FROM ON HIGH. INDEED, AS I HAVE SUGGESTED, THE
ACT OF PASSING DOWN FROM THOSE WHO HAVE CONSIDERED
THEMSELVES THE OFFICIALS GUARDIANS HAS BEEN SHARPLY
CHALLENGED AT LAST. THE GREAT TEXTS OF OUR HERITAGE
DO NOT CARRY THEIR OWN AUTHORITY AS THE SCRIPTURES
OR THE ILIAD ONCE DID. INSTEAD, CULTURAL MEANING
IS CONSTRUCTED ANEW AT EACH MOMENT, CONSTRUCTED BY
THE CHOICES AND ACTIVITY OF OUR CITIZENS.

EVERY AMERICAN NEEDS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAVOR
THE DIVERSE POSSIBILITIES OF OUR DISTINCTIVE CULTURAL
TRADITIONS.

FROM THOSE OF HIS OWN ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC
BACKGROUND, HE MAY AFFIRM SOME MEANINGS. FROM HIS
EDUCATION AND ADULT LIFE HE MAY AFFIRM OTHERS. EACH
OF US IN A SENSE CARRIES CULTURAL DIVERSITY WITHIN
OURSELVES. BILINGUALISM, MULTI-CULTURALISM, RACIAL
AND ETHNIC COMPLEXITY ARE WE ARE DISCOVERING, THE
BIRTHRIGHT, THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVERY SINGLE
AMERICAN NO MATTER WHAT HIS BACKGROUND.

I WELCOME YOUR HELP, THE HELP OF THE SCHOLARS
AND TEACHERS GATHERED HERE IN OUR EFFORT TO CLARIFY
HOW FEDERAL POLICY CAN BRING ABOUT SUCH OPPORTUNITIES
FOR CULTURAL AFFIRMATION AMONG ALL OUR CITIZENS.

THANK YOU.

Authority,

Some philosophers and historians have argued that nothing characterizes a man's life so well as the way he marks time. Some focus on the passing hour, live from day to day. Others see their life in weeks, as a bound set of appointment books with spaces to be filled in regularly. Others still are moved most by the seasons, and some by the measure of a year--their lives a set of resolutions made and assessed. Finally, there are a few who have life-works to occupy them, who see everything as part of a piece.

True wisdom may come at this latter end of the scale, understanding and accepting the continuities of one's life, even the connection of one's life to that of one's parents and one's children. But since the romantic age, we have also loved the miraculous moment, the single instant when we felt perfectly alert, fully alive.

There's another way to mark time. What are the landmark dates? In a nineteenth-century minister's diary, we can read of his annual remembrance of the day of his birth, of his marriage, of his evangelical conversion, and of his ordination. In our own more Freudian age, we ~~speak of~~ speak of psychological markers--an event which stands for adolescence, and one for career choice, and one for mid-life crisis, and so on. But there are other people who still like to associate the progress of their lives with external events, with world-shaking occurrences. They can remember where they were when they heard of FDR's death, of JFK's shooting, of the founding of the state of Israel, of Nixon's

Authority,

resignation.

What unites all these different ways of marking time, I think, at least for my generation, is the centrality of the 1960's in our lives. It was during the sixties that many more milestone events occurred--during the 1960's when the key decisions about one's life-work occurred. And during the sixties when there were moments of such exquisite pain and joy, such fear and such exultation, that we never knew ourselves to be so alive. The memory of those moments shames us with our present quietude, even as we shudder to recall the horror of many of those moments.

I am constantly amazed to discover in my work at the National Endowment for the Humanities, how often the cultural questions of the 1960's return in our deliberations. The agency itself, of course, was founded in 1965. Some of our applicants are groups formed in the 1960's to respond to new stirrings of ethnic consciousness in the country. Some of the research projects are concerned with interdisciplinary fields which first emerged during the blossoming of new such programs during the 1960's. Many of the curricular projects we support--for teacher training, for student field and internship experiences and off-campus learning, for student participation in collaborative research projects--were the product of the quest in the 1960's for alternatives to the traditional forms of academic instruction, the lecture and seminar.

But-- But there is a more subtle effect, a more lasting residue, of the 1960's on our minds. It has to do with the

Authority,

way we view the uses of intelligence, the possibility of truth, the reliability of our traditions, the relationship of scholarship to power relations and ideology in the wider society, and so on. In a sense, the world of culture we inhabit in the late 1970's and in the 1980's is vastly different from the one we were groomed to inhabit twenty and thirty years earlier. For those of us who were educated in the 1940's and 1950's, we are still emigrants into a new land, where different languages are spoken, different assumptions are made, different conclusions are sought.

What happened in the 1960's? What happened to the form of our thought? to the style of our intelligence?

In the 1960's, things which had been stable were unhinged, and things which were loose found themselves chained together.

For example, it became important during the 1960's to see the ultimate connections among seemingly distinct, and even neutral activities. Universities were not neutral custodians of wisdom and learning, we discovered, but closely linked agencies of the social order, performing important social functions (like the selection and training of students to play elite roles in the capitalist economy), and economically dependent upon the corporate economy of the United States. Economic links had to have intellectual consequences, we came to see.

Forms of religious, of sexual and racial bigotry, we discovered, were linked to the hegemony of white males in the American social order. The shape of a building, the direction of a street, the hours of opening and closing for government offices, everything reflected the convenience, the dominance of

Authority,

certain classes and the subjugation of others.

On the other hand, we ourselves could be freed, "liberated," from our inevitable roles in this well-oiled war and profit machine. We could take what sociologists called a "theoretic stance" toward many of the institutions of ordinary life-- marriage and parenthood, clerisy and laity, teaching, working, our diets and recreational pleasures, and almost everything else--and ~~judge how~~ we could reconstruct these to be more consistent, more pure, more in keeping with the new moral imperatives we wanted to impose on the social order itself.

Of course, not everyone, and few of us in this room, went so far as to question every such tacit commitment in our lives. None of us, I think, would give up our sense that learning was important, that rationality was a virtue, that civility was to be treasured even between hardbitten antagonists. And yet we were willing, many of us, to tolerate, and perhaps even to explain away such- various ~~forms~~ ^{acts} of violence, idiocy, and incivility as being parts of some chain of circumstance, and hence part of a coercive world of its own, and therefore not morally responsible- blameworthy. Even our own tolerance could be explained as a response to the enormity of the violence in Vietnam, or to the hideous poverty, malnutrition, and illness we were all discovering in our cities and our rural backwaters.

Time has softened much of the rancor of those days, and cured us of much of our foolishness. But many of the truths

Authority,

we discovered then have still not been integrated into a sounder way of doing things. They still eat away at us, and their corrosiveness is met by an equally virulent reaction from those still embittered by the events of the 1960's.

One example is the attack on authority. One thread which runs through all the literature of the 1960's is the arrogance of power. Not authority itself, but the tendency of authority to clothe itself in righteousness, was assaulted again and again. In cultural affairs, it was not the superiority of great scholars and artists, of great museums, libraries, and universities, and performing companies which had to be questioned, but their claim to be representative, to be stewards of high civilization, even to embody the best traditions of this whole society.

On closer inspection, these claims seemed to be silly.

A survey course in world history at any of our major institutions of higher learning was very often a narrative of the triumph in Western Europe and America of Protestant, critical, scientific world-views.

Access, even physical access, to many of these riches was effectively limited to the thinnest slice of our upper social and economic classes.

Our regional cultures, our mother tongues extraordinarily diverse ethnic backgrounds, the languages and oral histories of mest-of-the-American-- huge numbers of Americans, the artistic endeavors of these people as well as almost anything having to do with women--all were scorned as less worthy of scholarly and artistic support.

Authority,

We discovered, in short, that despite our protestations to the contrary, we had an ^{quasi-}official, well-established, culture in the United States. It was a tradition of high-minded and tasteful appreciation of the arts and learning, sanctified by a worthy moral purposiveness, and explicitly committed to democratic values--though not necessarily to democratic process. It was a descendant of the ~~old-time self-improving~~ vision of Matthew Arnold "to make current the best that is known and thought everywhere." During the late nineteenth century that tradition had become conjoined in America with the self-improving energies of ^{the} small-town, middle-class ~~culture~~ culture embodied in the Chatauqua movement. In the twentieth century, the Arnoldian tradition had become a little bleaker with the advent of Marxist criticism of the bourgeois social order and Freudian criticism of the motives for self-improvement. Perhaps equally important in severing the Arnoldian tradition ^{of moral uplift} from its small-town Protestant ~~counterpart~~ counterpart was the increasing specialization and fragmentation of academic scholarship. Studying the great books in a major university or research library in 1960 had little to do with reading the same books in a small-town public library at the same date. But the canonical elevation of ^{the same} ~~books~~ books to greatness still tied these two improving traditions together.

Some in the Academy made gracious efforts to accommodate the new, more diverse, challenges of the 1960's to established

Authority,

thought and culture. But others felt threatened by the incursions of new disciplines, of experimental forms of teaching and learning, of nontraditional students and teachers from different social backgrounds. Rallying around the call to preserve academic standards, to defend the canon, to uphold ~~exceell~~ the ideal of excellence, they dramatized the student revolt of the 1960's ^{as} ~~into~~ something much more powerful and gripping, the defense of civilization itself from the barbarian hordes.

In the process something terribly tragic has occurred. Sensing that their arguments for excellence could not be understood by their antagonists, or indeed by anyone outside their own particular world of scholarship, many scholars of this neo-conservative cast have ~~xxxx~~ ^{simply} given up the need to defend excellence. Or rather, they have taken a more roundabout course, ^{defending} ~~to defend~~ excellence by attacking mediocrity. It is easier, and more entertaining, to savage the recent innovations of junior colleagues, of ~~recent~~ new members of the academic world, than it is to explain what good work is really being done, and why it is important to the whole society.

Perhaps I am being too personal when I describe this as "tragic," but it has profoundly affected the work of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the prospects for public support of cultural activities in this country. Let me explain how that is so.

The NEH was created in the balmy days of 1965. In the

Authority,

years preceding its establishment, there had been a number of calls for federal assistance to the scholars working in the areas of history, philosophy, and literature, to match the already large funds supplied to scientists by the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and Mental Health, and other agencies. Through all these appeals for public funding, there runs a single thread--that scholarship in the humanities is in the highest national interest, that its benefits will be felt by all citizens, that it will be the truest test of our maturity as a nation.

(maybe some material here from the Commission, or from Henry Moe)

The intervening years have been successful ones for the NEH. It has really made a difference, I think, in the ability of scholars to plan and perform sophisticated research projects. It has helped colleges and universities meet the challenge of new intellectual and social currents in devising new curricula in the humanities. And perhaps most surprisingly, it has encouraged the participation of millions of nonscholars, of nonprofessionals, in public programs in the humanities--museum exhibits, films, television, public discussion programs, and local study programs in thousands of American communities.

But the fissures within American academic life have taken had their effect. Gradually, the old optimistic defense of excellence has been discarded. In its place, the defensiveness of neoconservatives in the academy have redefined excellence

Authority,

as their exclusive preserve. The other programs at the Endowment, chiefly those concerned with education and public programs, have been defined in the New York Times and elsewhere as "populist" in character, sops to the democratic demands of public funding. Rather than understand that these programs, too, and needed to have and often achieved impressive levels of skill, even excellence, they have been written off as inferior programs.

Furthermore, within various academic disciplines, the argument that scholarship serves only its own ends has grown immeasurably over the past decade. Literary criticism, it is now often said, is meant only to elucidate the self-referentiality of the text. Historians are warned against trying to draw any lessons for contemporary society from their acts of imaginative reconstruction and documentation of past lives. Philosophy is regarded as an internally consistent game, ~~with~~ ^{of} little utility ^{or interest} for the laymen.

I am not going to argue that scholarship ^{especially in the humanities,} has any immediate practical benefits to offer American society, ~~especially scholarship in the humanities.~~ But scholarship is a social act, and scholars are constantly engaged--even when they are least aware of it--in testing the common assumptions of contemporary thought. They experiment with ways of making sense of our world, they ~~plumb~~ ^{plumb} ~~scale~~ the aspirations and ^{work} the despairs of every turn of our ~~cultural~~ ^{collective} psyche. They do not ~~exist~~ in some hermetic device, isolated from their fellow-citizens, but in every subtle way they are carrying out work which is crucial to our society's understanding

Authority,

of itself.

(I can supply examples here.)

Further Additionally, the scholarly conscience, the will to continue to make better sense of one's material until time, patience, wit, and foolhardiness are all exhausted, is a moral force of great importance to all Americans. The example of excellence is as important-as its achievements.

When I appear before Congressional committees, I am pleased to celebrate the splendid ^{work} ~~achievements~~ of American scholars, and ^{it} ~~the~~ importance ^{for all our people.} ~~of the work they are doing.~~ To me it is the best part of this job. I am proud for all of us that the provinciality which once characterized American thought is gone forever, that we are second to the Japanese only in the study of Japanese literature and culture, second to the French only in the study of their own cultural inheritance--in fact, that we are the most cosmopolitan of cultures.

But American scholarship will not survive as an autonomous, exclusive, self-contained preserve. Depending as it does on private and public funds, research and study has to celebrate itself in terms which are comprehensible, acceptable, engaging to the broader populace beyond the library walls.

In order to do this, we need to confront one of the most dreadful-legacies-of-the-1960's- unresolved dilemmas of the 1960's. We need to find ways for authority to be expressed graciously, openly. We need leadership which is not full of bluster and scorn, but exemplary and accommodating, willing to tolerate diversities within itself. We need to find ways to stitch

Authority,

together all the myriad sorts of excellence in America, to recognize their constant interconnectedness. The sharp eye of the art historian needs to look over the shoulder of the city planner, the philosopher's criticism of educational theory over the shoulder of parents debating how to improve their schools, the historian's witness to the historie-- physical scale of older societies ~~xxxxxxx~~ over the shoulder of those of us coming to grips with a society turning away from suburbanization and expansion.

The-American

Excellence in America has for too long been associated only with our most aggressive, individualistic, cultural traditions. There is another tradition, familiar to you here more than to most other groups of Americans. It stems from the work of Jonathan Edwards in eighteenth-century America. For Edwards, "excellency" meant a perfect relatedness, the harmonic connections between a person and his God, between two people in love, between a smaller wisdom and a greater. Looked at in this way, we could see excellence in the learning of a child as well as in that of scholar, in a freshman's grappling with a composition/^{assignment} class as much as in the last revisions of a scholarly monograph. In the midst of all of this flap about equality and excellence, about populism and elitism, it comes as a shock and then as a relief to recall Edwards' conclusion in his notes that "Excellency therefore seems to consist in equality."

REMARKS PREPARED FOR CONFERENCE ON THE HUMANITIES IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

AIRLIE HOUSE

NOVEMBER 4, 1979

by

JOSEPH DUFFEY

Chairman

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HERE WHO HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE ENDOWMENT IN ITS RELATIONS WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE UNITED STATES, PRESIDENT ED GLAZER AND ROGER YARRINGTON. CHANCELLOR JOE RUSHING, WHO IS A MEMBER OF OWN NATIONAL COUNCIL AND CHANCELLOR LESLIE KOLTI, FORMERLY A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES, BOTH OF WHOM UNDERSTAND THE SPECIAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED TO THE HUMANITIES BY COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES.

THIS IS, HOWEVER, MORE THAN JUST A GATHERING OF GOOD FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES. THE THOUGHTFUL AND INDEED EXCELLENT CONFERENCE PAPERS YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU, AMPLY TESTIFY THAT THIS IS A GATHERING OF EXPERTS, TEACHERS, SCHOLARS, ADMINISTRATORS AND COMMENTATORS, ALL OF WHOM HAVE A FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE STATE OF THE HUMANITIES IN OUR TWO YEAR COLLEGES.

MANY OF WHOM HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SHAPING PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION AND OF THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE THAT THE HUMANITIES CAN AND SHOULD PLAY IN THE CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS OF OUR JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

I HAD THOUGHT OF BRINGING YOU A GENERAL MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND SAGE COUNSEL ABOUT THE FUTURE.

THAT WAS MY STRATEGY BEFORE I READ AND RE-READ THE SEVERAL CONFERENCE PAPERS THAT WILL SHAPE AND GUIDE YOUR DISCUSSIONS OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

I FOUND THE ASSESSMENT PUT FORWARD IN THOSE PAPERS SUFFICIENTLY SOBERING AS TO HAVE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT MY CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR DELIBERATIONS MIGHT BE.

THE USUAL PLATITUDES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE AND VIRTUES OF THE HUMANITIES SIMPLY WON'T DO, AND A LITANY OF THE GOOD WORKS OF THE ENDOWMENT SEEMS STRIKINGLY OUT OF PLACE.

I SAY THIS BECAUSE ONE THING IS MADE DECIDEDLY CLEAR IN THE BACKGROUND PAPERS:

THE PROSPECTS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE HUMANITIES IN OUR NATION'S TWO-YEAR COLLEGES ARE LESS THAN WHOLLY SECURE.

IF, AS ARTHUR COHEN AND FLORENCE BRAWER ARGUED, THE HUMANITIES ARE NO LONGER A "GIVEN" IN OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND IF, AS DAVID BRENEMAN AND SUSAN NELSON MAINTAIN, FINANCING "IS NEITHER THE CAUSE NOR THE LIKELY SOLUTION TO THE DIFFICULTIES FACING THE HUMANITIES IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES," THEN THAT IS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE AND CONCERN TO US ALL--AND ESPECIALLY TO THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT.

THERE IS NO CONSTITUENCY TO WHOM THE ENDOWMENT SEEKS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE THAT IS MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS, HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS OF OUR CITIZENS THAN OUR TWO-YEAR COLLEGES. PLACED, AS THEY ARE, IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS OUR LAND, THEY RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF A GENUINE CROSS-SECTION OF OUR SOCIETY, RURAL AND URBAN, BLUE-COLLAR WORKER AND PROFESSIONAL, LOW-INCOME AND AFFLUENT.

IF THE HUMANITIES CANNOT FIND A WELCOME HOME IN SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT, WE CAN TAKE LITTLE SOLACE IN BEING TOLD THAT THEIR FUTURE IS ASSURED WITHIN THE LIBRARIES OF OUR GREAT RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES AND THE CLASSROOMS OF OUR LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES.

AS LESLIE KOLTAI SUGGESTS, THESE PRIVILEGED INSTITUTIONS, IMPORTANT AS THEY CLEARLY ARE, DO NOT CONSTITUTE THE WHOLE OF WHAT HE CALLS THE "HUMANITIES FAMILY."

THE HUMANITIES ARE NOT THE SACRED PROVINCE OF A SELECT FEW. THEY ARE, INSTEAD, THE INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL RESOURCES BY WHICH A SOCIETY AS A WHOLE PERCEIVES AND GIVES SHAPE TO ITS CULTURAL LIFE AND LEGACY.

NO SET OF INSTITUTIONS IS BETTER PLACED, LITERALLY, THAN OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES, TO INSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THESE RESOURCES--RESOURCES THAT ARE THE RIGHTFUL HERITAGE OF ALL OF OUR CITIZENS.

WHILE I HAVE BEEN CHASTENED BY THE ASSESSMENT OF HOW THE HUMANITIES ARE FARING IN OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND WHILE I ESCHEW ANY FALSE NOTE OF OPTIMISM, I FOUND NOTHING IN THE PAPERS YOU ARE DISCUSSING THAT COUNSELS DESPAIR OR RESIGNATION.

ON THE CONTRARY, THROUGHOUT THESE PAPERS THERE IS A CONSISTENT THEME:

THERE ARE NO OBSTACLES SO GREAT AND NO PROBLEMS SO INTRACTABLE, ASSOCIATED WITH ENHANCING THE VITALITY OF THE HUMANITIES IN OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES, THAT WE CANNOT ENVISION AND STRIVE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE AND A RESTORATION OF LIBERAL LEARNING TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE.

WHILE THE ENDOWMENT CANNOT ACCEPT CREDIT FOR THE MANY INITIATIVES THAT TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

HAVE BEGUN TO TAKE TO REVITALIZE HUMANISTIC LEARNING IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES, WE CAN AND WE DO TAKE CONSIDERABLE PRIDE IN HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST IN THESE EFFORTS. IT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR MISSION, THE NATURE OF YOUR OBJECTIVES AND THE NEEDS OF THE CONSTITUENCY YOU SEEK TO SERVE THAT COMPELS THE ENDOWMENT TO BE RESPONSIVE TO YOUR EFFORTS.

JOHN TERREY POINTS US TOWARD THE HISTORICAL RECORD AND A TELLING STATEMENT AS TO PRECISELY WHY THIS IS SO. HE REMINDS US THAT THE TRUMAN COMMISSION OF 1947 DEFINED A COMMUNITY COLLEGE AS AN INSTITUTION THAT "SEEKS TO BECOME A CENTER OF LEARNING FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY, WITH OR WITHOUT THE RESTRICTIONS THAT SURROUND FORMAL COURSE WORK IN TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION."

HE GOES ON TO NOTE THAT THE COMMISSION MADE THIS POINT IN YET ANOTHER AND EVEN MORE FORCEFUL WAY:

"THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN KEEPING INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY ALIVE IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL CITIZENS, OF STIMULATING THEIR ZEST FOR LEARNING, OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS CITIZENS ARE LIMITED ONLY BY THE VISION, THE ENERGY AND THE INGENUITY OF THE COLLEGE STAFF."

FROM THAT RINGING DECLARATION, JOHN RIGHTLY CONCLUDES THAT "IF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE THE INSTITUTIONS OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION, THEY MUST BE VITALLY CONCERNED WITH SUSTAINING THE HUMANITIES IN GOOD HEALTH FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL PEOPLE WHO ENTER THE OPEN DOOR."

IT IS, OF COURSE, ONE THING TO SAY WHAT SHOULD BE THE CASE, AND ALTOGETHER ANOTHER TO EXPLAIN HOW SUCH AN OBJECTIVE MIGHT BE ACHIEVED.

AS I READ THE CONFERENCE PAPERS I WAS STRUCK, TIME AND AGAIN, BY THE PLAIN, SOUND COMMON SENSE THAT WAS BEING EMPLOYED IN REASONING ABOUT THE OPTIONS WE HAVE IN SEEKING TO REVITALIZE THE HUMANITIES IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES.

THERE ARE, I THINK, THREE AREAS IN WHICH THE ENDOWMENT HAS BEEN AND CAN CONTINUE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORTING THE HUMANITIES IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES: FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, CURRICULAR PROGRAMS, AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH. WHILE MOST OF THE CONFERENCE PAPERS TOUCH ON ALL OF THESE AREAS, I WANT TO TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO REFLECT ON THE OPPORTUNITIES EACH AFFORDS FOR STRENGTHENING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE HUMANITIES AND SUGGEST WAYS IN WHICH THE ENDOWMENT CAN LEND ITS ASSISTANCE.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS OF ART COHEN AND FLORENCE BRAWER SUGGEST THAT THE FACULTY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES FACE AN IMPOSING COMBINATION OF DIFFICULTIES AND LIMITATIONS THAT THWART AND DIFFUSE THEIR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN THE HUMANITIES: THEIR COURSE ENROLLMENTS CONTINUE TO SHRINK, THEY LACK SUFFICIENT STAFF AND RESOURCES, THEIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH AND RENEWAL ARE LIMITED, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, THEIR MORALE PLUMMETS.

WE CANNOT STRESS TOO MUCH THE PLAIN TRUTH THAT HUMANITIES FACULTY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES HAVE TAKEN ON A SPECIAL MISSION--A MISSION WHICH ENJOINS THEM TO APPROACH THEIR WORK IN DIFFERENT AND, PERHAPS, MORE IMAGINATIVE WAYS THAN THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THE UNIVERSITY AND LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE COMMUNITIES.

WHILE IT SURELY IS AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT THEY TEACH IN A HOSTILE OR UNRECEPTIVE ENVIRONMENT, IT IS CLEAR, I THINK, THAT THEY FIND THEMSELVES AT AN UNFAIR DISADVANTAGE IN COMPETING FOR THE ATTENTION AND INTEREST OF STUDENTS--MOST OF WHOM ARE COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOCUSSED ON VOCATIONAL AND OCCUPATION TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION.

TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THESE COMPETING CLAIMS, THE FACULTY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES NEED TO DEVELOP FRESH

APPROACHES TO INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE HUMANITIES--
APPROACHES THAT BUILD INTERDISCIPLINARY BRIDGES
BETWEEN THE HUMANISTIC DISCIPLINES AND SUCH AREAS AS
HEALTH CARE, ENGINEERING, PARA-LEGAL TRAINING, BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION. AS LESLIE KOLTAI HAS SUGGESTED, "BY
ADAPTING HUMANITIES PROGRAMS FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS
OR FOR THOSE ALREADY EMPLOYED, WE CAN BROADEN" THE HORIZONS
OF THE STUDENTS WHILE REVITALIZING THE HUMANITIES PROGRAMS
OF OUR TWO-YEAR COLLEGES.

IF TO ACCOMPLISH THIS FACULTY AT TWO-YEAR COLLEGES
NEED MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP NEW TEACHING METHODS
AND DESIGN NEW COURSES, THEN THE ENDOWMENT SHOULD BE
RESPONSIVE. WE DO OFFER SUMMER SEMINARS FOR TWO-YEAR
COLLEGE FACULTY AND MAKE INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULAR PROGRAMS. WE ALSO PROVIDE
SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS THAT ENABLE TWO-YEAR FACULTY MEMBERS
TO DO ADDITIONAL GRADUATE WORK. PERHAPS THERE NEED
TO BE MORE SUCH OPPORTUNITIES; PERHAPS THEY NEED TO BE
STRUCTURED DIFFERENTLY. IN ANY CASE, IN THE AREAS OF
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND CURRICULAR INNOVATION AND
EXPERIMENTATION, THE ENDOWMENT REMAINS PREPARED TO BE
HELPFUL.

THE CLASSROOM AND THE FORMAL COURSE NEED NOT
BE THE ONLY POINTS AT WHICH A STUDENT COMES IN CONTACT
WITH THE HUMANITIES. NO ONE KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN THE

FACULTIES AND ADMINISTRATORS OF OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES. SINCE 1977, AACJC AND ITS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS HAVE, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ENDOWMENT, TAKEN A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF COMMUNITY FORUMS SQUARELY FOCUSSED ON THE HUMANITIES. BY ANY MEASURE, THIS EFFORT HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT AND SUCCESSFUL ONE. IT HAS FORGED A LINK BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND THOSE OF ITS CONSTITUENTS WHO HAVE A GENUINE INTEREST IN HUMANISTIC INQUIRY AND DIALOGUE. THESE FORUMS ALSO SERVE TO ENCOURAGE A NATURAL ALLIANCE AMONG INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH COMMON OBJECTIVES. THEY INVITE THE INVOLVEMENT OF MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES, HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS, CHURCHES AND OTHER COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND THEY SERVE TO DRAW PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE RICH RESOURCES IN THE HUMANITIES THESE INSTITUTIONS SHARE.

WHILE DIANE EISENBERG CAUTIONS US NOT TO MAKE TOO MUCH OF THE LINK BETWEEN THESE COMMUNITY FORUMS AND THE VITALITY OF THE HUMANITIES CURRICULAR PROGRAMS IN OUR TWO-YEAR COLLEGES, THERE IS A CONNECTION WORTH PONDERING.

SEVERAL OF THE CONFERENCE PAPERS CALL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LAY ADVISORY BOARDS FOR THE HUMANITIES DEPARTMENTS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES. COMMUNITY LEADERS HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SUPPORTING THE PUBLIC FORUMS

SPONSORED BY COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND IT WOULD SEEM A LOGICAL NEXT STEP TO INVITE THEM TO LEND THEIR SUPPORT TO THE MORE DIFFICULT BUSINESS OF INSURING THAT FORMAL INSTRUCTION IN THE HUMANITIES IS SUSTAINED AND VITALIZED. LAY LEADERSHIP IN THE HUMANITIES SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO PUBLIC ACTIVITIES OR PROJECTS. THE PASSAGE BETWEEN INFORMAL AND FORMAL TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE HUMANITIES NEED NOT BE A NARROW ONE, LIMITED ONLY TO THOSE WITH THE "PROPER CREDENTIALS." TO BE PERFECTLY CANDID, SOME OF THE PROBLEMS CURRENTLY CONFRONTING THE HUMANITIES ARE TRACEABLE IN PART TO THE PROVINCIALISM OF PROFESSIONAL HUMANISTS WHO ARE UNWILLING TO SHARE THEIR STEWARDSHIP OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE WITH OTHERS. I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT BART GIAMATTI HAS GOT IT QUITE RIGHT IN REMINDING THE MANDARINS OF THE ACADEMY THAT ALL THOSE "WHO BELIEVE IN A SHARED CORE OF VALUES" ARE HUMANISTS AND IT IS UP TO EVERYONE OF THEM, AND NOT JUST THE ACADEMICIANS, TO MAKE THE CASE FOR THE HUMANITIES.

IF THE ENDOWMENT CAN BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE IN EXPLORING THIS PROSPECT, WE WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY. WE HAVE LONG FOUND ATTRACTIVE THE NOTION THAT COMMUNITIES MIGHT BE WILLING, INDEED, EAGER TO POOL THEIR EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND LEADERSHIP IN THE SUPPORT

OF OBJECTIVES COMMONLY SHARED. THE CREATION OF LAY ADVISORY BOARDS MIGHT WELL BE AN ATTRACTIVE WAY TO TEST THE FEASIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE HUMANITIES.

I HAVE NOT BEGUN TO DO JUSTICE TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PAPERS BEFORE THIS ASSEMBLY, ALTHOUGH I HAVE SHAMELESSLY STOLEN THOUGHTS FROM EACH OF THEM. I WISH THAT MY SCHEDULE WOULD ALLOW ME TO STAY AND PARTICIPATE IN THE SESSIONS TO BE HELD OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS, FOR, AS I HAVE TRIED TO SUGGEST, YOU ARE GOING TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN AND IMPORTANCE TO THE ENDOWMENT.

I HAVE KEPT YOU TOO LONG, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE WITH A FEW PERSONAL REMARKS.

WHEN I CAME TO THE ENDOWMENT TWO YEARS AGO, I FOUND MYSELF IN THE MIDST OF A DEBATE NOT OF MY OWN MAKING--IT WAS LIKE WALKING INTO A CARSON CITY SALOON IN THE MIDDLE OF A SHOOT OUT AT HIGH NOON. AMID THE FUSILLADE OF RHETORIC ABOUT ELITISM AND POPULISM, I FELT AN INSTINCTIVE NEED TO FOCUS MY ATTENTION ON EXACTLY WHAT WAS AT ISSUE. WHILE THE VOICES WERE SOMETIMES A BIT TOO SHRILL AND THE ARGUMENTS OFTEN SUFFERED FROM A BAD CASE OF HYPERBOLE, I BECAME PERSUADED THAT THE DEBATE HAD TO DO WITH MATTERS OF CONSEQUENCE. AS I SAID AT THE TIME OF MY CONFIRMATION,

"THIS SMALL AGENCY HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF SO MUCH CONTROVERSY AND SUBJECT TO CONTENTION PRECISELY BECAUSE IT MEANS SO MUCH TO SO MANY PEOPLE." I WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT IS "MY HOPE THAT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES WILL PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN GIVING LEADERSHIP AND DEFINITION TO HUMANISTIC LEARNING IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THEREBY ENABLING THE TASK OF THE INTELLECT AND THE ISSUES OF SOCIETY TO BE BROUGHT INTO COMMUNICATION WITH ONE ANOTHER."

THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS HOPE IS A RESPONSIBILITY NOT LIGHTLY OR EASILY BORNE BY SUCH A YOUNG FEDERAL AGENCY. IF WE ARE TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD THE GOAL OF ENSURING THAT THOSE OF OUR CITIZENS WITH A NATIVE CURIOSITY TO INQUIRE INTO THE HUMAN HERITAGE OR TO INCREASE THEIR SKILLS IN LANGUAGE AND REASON FIND ENCOURAGEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY, THEN WE WILL NEED THE GOOD WILL AND ASSISTANCE OF ALL THOSE WHO CARE DEEPLY ABOUT THE HUMANITIES. NO GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS MORE CLEARLY MIRRORS THE HOPE OF THE ENDOWMENT TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO AS MANY AMERICANS AS CARE TO ATTEND TO THEM THE INSIGHTS OF LEARNING IN THE HUMANITIES THAN OUR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES.

THANK YOU.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

January 9, 1980

CHAIRMAN

Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20071

Dear Sir:

On Saturday, January 5th, Jim Stasny contributed to your Op Ed page. He lamented the drab faces and presumed drab lives of those he called the "petty bourgeois" of Arlington. He was referring to passengers on bus 16C whom he observed on their way home from work one evening.

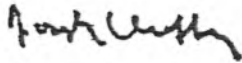
After reading Mr. Stasny's article, I found myself troubled for several days both by the tone and the substance of what he had written. As I have brooded on the piece, I find myself angry enough to write this note of dissent. Mr. Stasny's attitude toward those government employees whom he gratuitously describes as "GS pick-a-numbers", can only be described as condescending and demeaning.

May I suggest to Mr. Stasny that his thinly disguised contempt and pity towards these men and women results from his own insensitivity and not from any objective reality. I further suggest that the supercilious cynicism he displayed is a result of looking at humanity "in the lump", rather than at individual lives. Sometimes in the mass, we Homo Sapiens do not appear to be persons of essential dignity. But I think that one by one, we can stand up to scrutiny pretty well. Mr. Stasny should spend more time reading that marvellous column in the Post's Sunday Outlook section where individuals in Washington provide a diary of their week and especially those government employees who have been given the opportunity to speak for themselves in that section. There are of course, men and women in this city and in government jobs who perform unromantic, bureaucratic chores and who live with their share of faded hopes and dreams. (In fact, that describes part of the existence of all of us.) But if Mr. Stasny were to visit the men and women on bus 16C in their offices and in their homes, I am very sure that he would have found far more patience, good humor, pride in work well done than he now imagines possible. I also venture that he would find a surprisingly large measure of a now old-fashioned sense of public service. In their homes he would find people of lively curiosity, pursuing hobbies, avocations, continuing to learn, working in their communities, loving and caring for their mates and children. Mr. Stasny has conjured up in his dark, brooding

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Imagination pictures of denizens of quiet desperation who really do not exist. Mr. Stasny does a disservice to career government workers by indulging himself in such romantic speculation about the lives of mature men and women based on how they huddle up on a bus ride home on a cold winter afternoon.

Sincerely,



Joseph Duffey
Chairman